

THE MAN WELLINGTON

THROUGH THE EYES OF THOSE
WHO KNEW HIM

by

HIS GREAT-GRANDNIECE
MURIEL WELLESLEY

With Illustrations and Maps

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To
ARTHUR WELLESLEY
SOLDIER OF PEACE

He maketh the spirits of men to war against evil ;
Live therefore as the Warrior of Heaven who conquereth
 by Mercy and Justice,
Whose weapons are Forethought and Prudence.

Psalms of the West.

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From the Supplementary Despatches of the Duke
Wellington *at end*

PRINCIPAL STEPS

I N

ARTHUR WELLESLEY'S PROGRESS

FROM 1787 TO 1815

- 1787 March 17th, gazetted Ensign in the 73rd Regiment.
- 1788 December, Lieutenant in the 76th.
- 1788 January 23rd, exchanged into the 41st.
- 1788 Became A.D.C. to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland (the Marquess of Buckingham).
- 1791 Promoted to Captain in the 58th.
- 1792 Exchanged into the 18th Light Dragoons.
- 1793 April 30th, purchased majority in the 33rd Regiment.
- 1794 Promoted to Colonel commanding the 33rd.
- 1802 April 29th, promoted to Major-General.
- 1805 April 25th, promoted to Lieutenant-General.
- 1805 Awarded Order of the Bath.
- 1806 January 30th, appointed to Colonelcy of the 33rd Regiment.
- 1806 April 10th, married the Hon. Catherine Pakenham.
- 1806 April 12th, entered English Parliament as M.P. for Rye.
- 1807 In April became Secretary of State for Ireland.
- 1809 After Battles of Oporto and Talavera, created Baron Douro of Wellesley, and Viscount Wellington of Talavera (Peerage of United Kingdom).
- 1812 After capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, created Earl (Peerage of United Kingdom); Spanish Grandee of 1st Class; and Duque de Ciudad Rodrigo (Spanish title).
- 1812 After Battle of Salamanca, created Marquess (Peerage of United Kingdom); awarded Order of the Golden Fleece (Spanish).
- 1812 September, became Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish Army.
- 1813 January, appointed to Colonelcy of the Blues.

Principal Steps in Wellesley's Progress

- 1813 February, awarded Order of the Garter.
- 1813 Duque de Victoria (Portuguese title).
- 1813 After Battle of Vitoria, made Field-Marshal of England.
- 1814 After Battle of Toulouse, created Duke of Wellington (Peerage of United Kingdom).
- 1814 British Ambassador in Paris.
- 1815 After Battle of Waterloo, created Prince of Waterloo (Belgian title).

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PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN.

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| BATTLE OF VIMEIRO | August 21st, 1808 |
| PASSAGE OF THE DOURO AND CAPTURE OF OPORTO | May 12th, 1809 |
| BATTLE OF TALAVERA | July 27th-28th, 1809 |
| BATTLE OF BUSACO | September 27th, 1810 |
| Actions fought during Massena's retreat from Portugal | March 11th, 1811 |
| POMBAL | March 12th, 1811 |
| REDHINA | March 14th, 1811 |
| CASAL NOVA | March 15th, 1811 |
| FOZ D'ARONCE | April 3rd, 1811 |
| SABUGAL | May 3rd-5th, 1811 |
| BATTLE OF FUENTES DE ONOR | September 25th, 1811 |
| BATTLE OF EL BODON | January 19th, 1812 |
| CAPTURE OF CIUDAD RODRIGO | April 6th, 1812 |
| CAPTURE OF BADAJOZ | July 22nd, 1812 |
| BATTLE OF SALAMANCA | { September 19th to October 21st, 1812 |
| SIEGE OF BURGOS | June 21st, 1813 |
| BATTLE OF VITORIA | |
| BATTLE OF THE PYRENEES | July 25th to August 2nd, 1811 |
| (comprising actions of PUERTO DE MAYA, RONCESVALLES, SAROUREN, ECHALLAR) | |
| CAPTURE OF SAN SEBASTIAN | September 8th, 1813 |
| CROSSING OF THE BIDASSOA and subsequent fighting in the mountains including the fight for the Great Rhune Mountain | October 7th } to October 10th } 1813 |
| BATTLE OF THE NIEVELLE | November 10th, 1813 |
| BATTLE OF THE NIVE | December 9th-13th, 1813 |
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Chapter One

A GREAT ENGLISHMAN

HIS ARRIVAL

HIS EARLY YOUTH

The great man is he who hath no disposition or occasion
for any kind of deceit, no reason for being or appearing
different from what he is.

LANDOR.

IN the year 1769 a great Englishman was born, though it was Ireland, mother of great men, who gave him birth. This was Arthur Wellesley, or Wesley as the name was then spelt—the future Duke of Wellington.

Though born in Ireland, Arthur Wellesley was what is known as an English-Irishman, for in spite of several centuries on Irish soil, his forebears originally came from England.

In the wider interpretation of the word he was certainly an Englishman. His life was spent in England's service; not in serving only that small portion of *terra firma* entitled to the name, but all that appertains to, and belongs to her; carrying her shield of honour unblemished before the nations. This was the great ideal of his life, the ruling principle which governed all his thoughts and actions.

Ireland, however, was his motherland; it was she who gave to England this great citizen of hers. Certain things he must have taken from her, she would not have let him go without putting her mark upon him.

There was, for example, that hot temper, which sometimes got the better of all his English characteristics, and sent them flying to the winds. Generally it was held in check, at all times of stress and trial it was well under control. But sometimes in unguarded moments, when the English watch-dog's back was turned, the Irish terrier got out and laid about him; such a storm and commotion then ensued, such a shaking

and tearing of words and epithets, until the Irishman had had his say when he would retire contentedly from whence he came, and the English watchdog would once more guard the door.

But this happened more frequently in later years when the frailties of age were creeping upon him. In youth and middle life, the Irish terrier was in general kept securely leashed, and there are surprisingly few recorded instances of bursts of temper.

There was, too, a certain dreaminess of temperament in childhood and early youth, which has a distinctly Celtic suggestion ; who knows what his career would have been if Mother Ireland had had her way with him ? For there seem to have been two separate channels through which his development might have taken place. There was the sensitive and emotional side to his nature, as well as the hard-headed practical one, and in early youth the former was uppermost.

Nothing could be more unostentatious than the way Arthur Wellesley slipped into the world. Even the place and date of his arrival have been shrouded in uncertainty. Some authorities say he was born in Merrion Street, Dublin, others at Dangan Castle, the Mornington's country home. The date has also been a matter of controversy, but his mother says it was May 1st, and she might be supposed to know something about it.

There was no particular thrill about his arrival, he was not the eldest child, babies were quite a common occurrence by the time he put in an appearance.

Little did his mother guess, as she held the scrap of humanity in her arms, that she was nursing the destiny of nations. That the tiny hands would one day hold the Sword of State of England, and the little breast be covered with glittering medals ; that the world would one day hang upon the words falling from that baby's mouth ; she knew none of these things, perhaps, if she had suspected them, she might have been more patient with him as he struggled through the difficulties of the awakening years.

Arthur Wellesley, or Wesley, was the third living son of Garret and Anne, Earl and Countess of Mornington, but the fifth child, for his sister Anne was older than he, and another brother had died in infancy. He had four brothers living, Richard, William, Gerald and Henry, the first two his seniors ; and two sisters Anne * and Mary.†

Garret,‡ Earl of Mornington, was a charming and agreeable person whose life had always fallen in pleasant places. The only son of Richard Colley Wesley,§ Baron Mornington, from the first his pathway had been smooth ; he had nothing to do but follow it, and be happy. His great passion in life was music, which he had both means and leisure to indulge. Even the joy of creation was not denied him, and he became a noted composer of his day. Lord Mornington does not seem to have made much impression upon the lives of his children, one senses that he was a sort of agreeable accompaniment to the family orchestra—which is true in more ways than one, since he played divinely upon the harpsichord and organ.

In connection with his organ playing there is a story told, which indicates the character of Anne, his wife. Richard, the eldest boy, adored his father's playing, and as a child used to steal into the chapel at Dangan and listen with rapt

* Lady Anne Wesley, 1768–1844. In 1790 she married the Hon. Henry Fitzroy, who died in Portugal in 1794. On her way back to England in company with her brother Henry, she was captured at sea by a ship of the French revolutionaries, brought before one of their tribunals, and suffered nine months' imprisonment. She afterwards married Charles Culling Smith, Esq.

† Lady Mary Wesley, 1772–94. Died unmarried.

‡ Wesley, Garret, 1st Viscount Wellesley of Dangan, and 1st Earl of Mornington, 1735–81.

§ Wellesley, or Wesley, Richard Colley, 1st Baron Mornington of the peerage of Ireland, 1690–1758. Youngest son, and eventually the heir, of Henry Colley of Castle Carberry, Kildare. In 1728 he succeeded to the estates of his cousin, Garret Wesley, or Wellesley of Dangan and Mornington, Co. Meath, taking the name and arms of Wellesley, or Wesley, as the name was then written.

attention. One day his ecstasy overcame him, and he threw himself down before the altar sobbing profusely. In this somewhat unusual position his mother found him, and demanded to know what on earth he was crying for. "Leave me quiet," gasped the young gentleman between his sobs, "I cannot hear the organ without crying, but I like it, it is a pleasure to me."¹

Now Anne was not a lady with a temperament, and such a state of affairs was quite inexplicable to her. It was obviously something to be discouraged. With a firm hand, therefore, Richard was removed protesting from the Chapel, and what was worse, forbidden to go there in like circumstances again. Anything emotional or high flown was out of the scope of Lady Mornington's consciousness. She was eminently practical and matter of fact, a normal conventional woman of the world, and doubtless liking her belongings to be normal and conventional as well.

But if her character was commonplace and conventional, it was decidedly a strong one and fitted her for the bringing up of sons. She was, moreover, a woman of high principles, with a strict sense of duty, which she inculcated in her children, and which, in the case of her son Arthur, became the fetish which ruled his life.

In other ways, however, she failed them, and there seems to have been something unsatisfying in the mental atmosphere of her home circle, and nothing to stimulate development. Looking back on it in after years Richard recognized this lack, and refers to his parents as "frivolous and careless personages like most of the Irish nobility of that time."

You taught them to respect me and my literary pursuits [he told his old school friend John Newport* of Eton days] and to encourage me

¹ *Lord Wellesley's Papers. British Museum Add. MS. 37416, folio 342.*

* Afterwards Sir John Newport, son of Simon Newport, a banker of Waterford. Created Baronet in 1789. Chancellor of the Irish Ex-



"PERHAPS AFTER ALL LADY MORNINGTON WAS THE RIGHT MOTHER FOR THE FUTURE DUKE OF WELLINGTON."

in the career of honor and glory, to which you had first directed my steps. You were to me what my Father *might* have been.¹

If the temperamental peculiarities of the brilliant Richard, whose scholarly attainments were the pride of the family, were not respected, it is hardly likely that Lady Mornington would take much trouble to understand what was going on in the mind of so insignificant a person as her small son Arthur, who showed no signs in childhood of that powerful personality which one day was to astonish the world.

There is [says Gleig *] reason to believe that, from some cause or another, he was not a favourite with his mother. . . . She seems to have taken it into her head that he was the dunce of the family, and to have treated him, if not harshly, with marked neglect. . . .²

So the sensitive little Arthur retired within himself, and the opening petals of his young soul, chilled with the east-wind of misunderstanding, began to fold inwards again, and passers-by saw only the dull outer colours, and knew nothing of the warm glow within.

But it was all part of the programme, the first lesson Arthur had to learn—self-repression, that necessary foundation for the purpose of his life. Perhaps, after all, Lady Mornington was the right mother for the future Duke of Wellington; she was the hardening solution in which his character had to be steeped. The process hurt, but it was the price of service, and Arthur Wellesley was born to serve. His life

¹ *British Museum Add. MS. 37416, folio 243.*

² Gleig, p. 3.

chequer under All The Talents Government (1806). Was a Whig in politics and a keen supporter of Catholic Emancipation.

* Gleig, George Robert, 1796-1888. Chaplain-General of the Forces. Started life as an officer in the 85th Regiment. Served in the Peninsular War 1813-14. Took Holy Orders in 1820. Was the author of many literary works including, *The Subaltern, Life of Arthur Duke of Wellington, Story of Battle of Waterloo*, etc. He became acquainted with the Duke some years after the War and was for five years the rector of Ash in the neighbourhood of Walmer, during which period he came much into contact with his former Commander-in-Chief. The Duke seems to have had a great liking for Gleig, and was godfather to one of his children.

was to be a very impersonal one. In a sense, he was never to be himself, for part of himself, the emotional part, had to be buried, lest it interfere with his life's work.

There never lived a soul who craved more for affection than this man who has been denied the capacity for even feeling it. Yet he was not to be permitted to find the ideal in any one intimate relationship of life. It was again part of the scheme of his destiny. Had it been otherwise, his ambitions would likely have centred round the object of his affection, his horizon have become narrowed, and a great driving force have been lost to the outside world.

It must not be supposed, however, that Arthur Wellesley passed through life unloved. On the contrary, he inspired in the hearts of his intimates, and those who surrounded him, a devotion which fell little short of worship, and though denied the perfect personal affection he was rich in the love of friends.

But to return to the soft mists of Ireland, and a rather lonely little boy, who annoyed his mother with "his slow thick speech and dull manner which gave him an air of stupidity".¹ Yet this little boy was far from stupid, and underneath his unpromising exterior lay the chrysalis of his brilliance, waiting until the time of full development should be accomplished. For that which is lasting comes slowly to maturity.

Arthur commenced his education at the Diocesan school of Meath, of which period there is nothing to record. From there he went to a preparatory school at Chelsea, an episode likewise barren of noteworthy incident.

His next adventure into the scholastic world was at Eton, where it would be impossible for anyone to have had a less distinguished career. "His habits . . . in school and out of school, are stated to have been those of a dreamy, idle and shy lad . . . he walked generally alone, often bathed alone, and seldom took part either in the cricket matches, or the boat-races. . . ."²

¹ *Sir Herbert Maxwell, Vol. I, p. 4.*

² *Gleig, p. 4.*



“A LONELY LITTLE BOY.”

In spite, however, of his dreaminess, it is satisfactory to note that he seems to have had the pugilistic tendencies of the average young male healthily developed, and the record of one good fight with a certain Bobus Smith at Eton has been handed down to posterity.

It happened one day [says Gleig] that while Smith was bathing in the Thames, young Wesley passed by, and, child-like, threw a small stone or clod at the swimmer. A threat to come ashore and thrash him if the insult were repeated, led, as a matter of course, to its repetition ; and Smith, being as good as his word, scrambled up the bank and attacked the culprit. The blow thus received was immediately returned, and a sharp contest ensued, which ended after a few rounds in favour of him who on that occasion had certainly not the right upon his side.¹

His holidays were possibly the happiest part of Arthur's childhood, for he spent much of them with his maternal grandmother, Lady Dungannon, at Brynkinalt, North Wales, where—grandmothers being notoriously indulgent—it is likely that he got a little unaccustomed spoiling.

At all events his fighting propensities were well to the fore, and another fight is on record in which, however, Arthur was not the victor. His opponent on this occasion was a young blacksmith who gave him a tremendous 'licking', "though not till", Gleig assures us, "both had suffered severe punishment . . .".²

It is pleasant to reflect that the vanquished took his defeat in the true sporting spirit ; "Master Wesley", so the blacksmith testifies, "bore him not a pin's worth of ill-will for the beating, but made him his companion in many a wild ramble after the fight, just as he had done before."³

When Arthur was twelve years old his father died. It is unlikely, however, that this event made any deep impression upon the boy's mind ; the mother was the dominating personality in this family, and of Arthur's relations with his father there is very little knowledge to be gleaned. That they were pleasant ones is almost certain, for the boy inherited his

¹ Gleig, pp. 4, 5.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

father's musical talent and at an early age learned to play upon the violin.

Far more important to Arthur was his eldest brother Richard,* for whom he entertained the greatest respect and admiration, which in spite of a sad estrangement in later years, lasted a lifetime. Arthur never quite outgrew his childhood's reverence for the great Richard, and when fifty years later, as Duke of Wellington, he was able to look back upon a life of achievement, we find him referring to his eldest brother as "the most brilliant and wonderful person in the world".¹

A great deal has been written about the estrangement of these two brothers which lasted only for a few years, but the deep affection which lasted all their lives has been ignored. The Duke's detractors have found great satisfaction in enlarging upon this fraternal quarrel, the blame for which is always laid upon his shoulders.

His great niece, Lady Rose Weigall, however, takes another view of the matter. In referring to the elder brother she observes that

He wrote beautifully expressed letters, full of kind sentiments to his relations, but rarely put himself out for anyone. In his latter years he

¹ *British Museum Add. MS. 37316, folio 246.*

* Wellesley, Richard Colley, 2nd Earl of Mornington, and Marquess Wellesley, 1760-1842. Eldest son of Garret, 1st Earl of Mornington. In 1793 became Member of Board of Control for Indian Affairs. Governor-General of India 1797-1805. British Ambassador in Seville 1809. Foreign Secretary 1809. Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland 1821-8, and again from 1833 to 1834. Knight of St. Patrick 1783. Knight of the Garter 1812. He was created Marquess Wellesley in the peerage of Ireland after the Battle of Seringapatam 1799. He was a fine classical and Italian scholar. Married in 1794, Hyacinthe Gabrielle Roland, a French lady, with whom he had previously been living, and his five children (to whom he was devoted) were born before the marriage took place. His first wife died in 1816, and he married secondly in 1825 Mary Anne Patterson, an American, widow of Robert Patterson and daughter of Richard Caton of Baltimore, U.S.A. This marriage was childless.

kept aloof from them all, so that the Duke's estrangement from him was certainly *not*, as has been implied, altogether the Duke's fault.¹

On the death of Lord Mornington, his widow found herself in straitened circumstances, for the Earl had left behind him a considerable number of debts. His son Richard behaved admirably in the circumstances, and though barely of age accepted most conscientiously the responsibilities of the situation, shouldering the weight of his father's liabilities, and giving his mother every assistance in straightening out affairs. To do this he made a great sacrifice and left the University directly his father died, without waiting to take his degree, a sacrifice which his brilliant talents rendered doubly hard.

In spite of Richard's help, however, Lady Mornington found her means considerably reduced, and though she struggled on for a year or two to keep up her position in society and maintain her sons at Eton, the strain eventually became too great, and in 1784 she went to Brussels to economize, taking with her young Arthur, whom she had been obliged to withdraw from Eton. They lodged in the house of a French lawyer named Goubert, under whose tutorship the boy continued his studies.

Sharing these same studies—or perhaps it would be more correct to say sharing his recreations, since neither was addicted to hard work—was another English boy, John Armytage by name, the son of an old friend of the late Lord Mornington.

At this period Arthur was still unformed in character, showing no indications of what his future career would be, but waking up a little, and entering into the gaieties of Brussels with his young friend, as far as boys of their ages might do. The only aptitude that he showed was for music, and Armytage remembers that he played the violin remarkably well. This violin playing was destined a few years later to a sudden

¹ *Lady Burghersh*, p. 24.

and drastic end, for when Arthur Wellesley had become a soldier and settled down seriously to his profession, he thought his violin was occupying too much of his thoughts, and in one of his relentless outbursts of duty he laid it aside and never touched it again.

The renunciation appears to have occurred during his Indian service, for Colonel Merrick Shawe, who knew him at this period, remembers his fondness for violin playing and states that "he burned his fiddles and never played again".¹

Arthur remained at Brussels about a year, after which he was sent to the Military Academy at Angers* in France with a view to gaining some smattering of military knowledge before entering the British Army. For by now the army—last resort in those days of despairing parents—had been selected for his profession. The selection seems to have caused his mother a considerable amount of trouble and irritation; "I vow to God, I don't know what I shall do with my awkward son Arthur," she is reported to have said, and to have declared on another occasion that, "he was food for powder and nothing more".²†

History has made a great feature of these remarks which do not exactly redound to Lady Mornington's credit. Remarks of this sort, however, cannot be taken on their face value, they are more often a loose and exaggerated manner of speaking; but the fact that they could ever have been attributed to Arthur's mother, shows that her unsympathetic attitude towards him was a recognized fact and explains a

¹ *Croker Papers, Vol. I, p. 311, footnote.*

² *Sir Herbert Maxwell, Vol. I, p. 4, footnote.*

* This Academy was not exclusively a military college, but was for civilians as well as soldiers.

† The authority for the first of these remarks was the Duke of Wellington's sister-in-law, the wife of his brother William. For the second, there appears to be no definite authority, though it is quoted by Sir Herbert Maxwell and other historians.

little the underlying unhappiness of his early days. Yet she would have been the first to grieve had his young body indeed become 'food for powder', for the mother-love even for her 'awkward son' existed somewhere in her heart, though obscured by impatience and lack of understanding, and when he became less 'awkward' it began to show itself.

At Angers Arthur did nothing startling but was, says a fellow student, "at that time rather of a weak constitution, not very attentive to his studies, and constantly occupied with a little terrier called Vick, which followed him everywhere".¹

But if he did nothing to distinguish himself, he was very happy there and managed to endear himself to those amongst whom he lived, finding in the person of the Duchesse de Serént,* wife of the Governor of the College, that warmth of understanding motherhood he had been denied at home.

Years afterwards in Paris, Arthur Wellesley, now Duke of Wellington, met his kind benefactress again. It was at a reception at the Tuilleries in 1815. Lady Shelley was leaning on the Duke's arm

when [she says] he suddenly dropped it, to greet, and kiss with reverence the hand of the most charming old lady of the *ville cour* that I ever met. The Duke introduced me to her as the Duchesse de Séran [sic] in whose society he had passed the happiest part of his life, and to whose matronly kindness he owed more gratitude than he could ever repay . . . The Duchesse de Séran [continues Lady Shelley] spoke to me of the noble qualities of mind and heart which had, in those early days, endeared Wellington to the Duc de Séran, and to herself.²

Arthur remained about eighteen months at Angers, after which he returned to England.

¹ *Raikes*, Vol. IV, p. 302. ² *Lady Shelley*, Vol. I, pp. 119, 120.

* It is not generally known that the Duc de Sérent was the actual Governor of this College, the post having been assigned by history to the Marquis de Pignérol. Pignérol, however, was the Deputy-Governor. The Duc de Sérent was a well-known personage of the period, but the dukedom is now extinct. Sérent is the correct spelling.

His sojourn in France had done him good ; he had begun to find his feet and gained a little more poise and self-confidence as well as polished manners, and a good French accent.

The family energies were now centred on getting him a job as soon as possible, anything would do so long as he became employed, there being nothing so irritating as a jobless youth hanging about the place. Even brother Richard seems to have been in a hurry to get him started.

Let me remind you [he writes to the Duke of Rutland *] of a younger brother of mine, whom you were so kind as to take into your consideration for a commission in the army. He is here at this moment, and perfectly idle. It is a matter of indifference to me what commission he gets, providing he gets it soon.¹

On March 17th Arthur Wesley was gazetted Ensign of the 73rd Regiment.†

It would be interesting to know where he was for the next nine months. He was certainly not with his regiment, for that was at Dinapore, Bengal ; yet from a remark made to Croker in after years he certainly seems to have been doing regimental duty somewhere.

He told me [says Croker ‡] that within a few days after joining his first regiment (I think he said the 73rd) as an ensign, he had one of the privates weighed in his clothes only, and then with all his arms, accoutrements, and kit in full marching order, with the view of comparing as well as he could the power of the man with the duty expected from him. I said [continues Croker] that this was a most extraordinary thought to have occurred to so young a man. He said, "Why, I was not so young as not to know that since I had undertaken a profession, I had better try to understand it." ²

¹ Letter quoted by Sir Herbert Maxwell, Vol. I, pp. 5, 6.

² Croker Papers, Vol. I, p. 312, footnote.

* Manners, Charles, 4th Duke of Rutland, 1754-87. Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, 1784-7.

† Now the 2nd Battalion of the Black Watch.

‡ Croker, John Wilson, 1780-1857. Politician and essayist. M.P. for Downpatrick 1807. Secretary to the Board of Admiralty. Born in Ireland and a lifelong friend of Arthur Wellesley.

Which goes to show that Arthur was somewhat brighter than popularly supposed. It is interesting, too, to note that attention to detail, one of his outstanding characteristics to which he largely attributed his success in life, showed itself in the first recorded incident in his military career. But his feet were set upon the right path, even though as yet he hardly realized it; he had found a niche at last, and meant to wedge himself firmly into it.

His next step forward was a lieutenancy in the 76th Regiment, where he remained less than a month, exchanging into the 41st on January 2nd, 1788. For his mother and brother Richard had been doing a little 'wire pulling', and instead of sailing for India, for which the 76th was destined, Arthur Wesley was placed upon the staff of the Marquess of Buckingham,* the new Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; an appointment which drew from Richard a letter of gratitude and appreciation.

You may well believe [he wrote Lord Buckingham] with what pleasure I received your appointment of my brother to a place in your family, not only as being a most kind mark of your regard for me, but as the greatest advantage to him. I am persuaded that under your eye he will not be exposed to any of those risks which in other times have accompanied the situation he will hold. I can assure you sincerely that he has every disposition which can render so young a boy deserving of your notice; and if he does not engage your protection by his conduct, I am much mistaken in his character.¹

So Arthur betook himself to Ireland, "where during the next two years his military education proceeded in the salon of Lady Buckingham and in the hunting field of his Excellency".²

On his way thither, he broke his journey at his grandmother's in North Wales, and on Sunday, January 27th, he

¹ Quoted by Torrens, p. 68.

² *Ibid.*, p. 69.

* Grenville, George Nugent Temple, 1st Marquess of Buckingham, 1753-1813. Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland 1782-3, and again in 1787-9.

was taken to visit the Ladies of Llangollen,* where he evidently made a good impression.

A charming young man [writes Lady Eleanor Butler in her diary]. Handsome, fashioned tall and elegant. He stayed till two, then proceeded to Ireland. Lady Dungannon stopped here . . . She was in the best Temper. Extremely pleasant and agreeable.¹

The next two years of Arthur's life were happy ones, for in addition to being in the centre of the fun and gaiety of the Irish capital, he found in the Buckingham establishment a very happy home. Lord Buckingham became greatly attached to his young A.D.C. and gave him a father's love, to which eventually was to be added a father's pride, and in that brilliant future which awaited the young officer, no heart beat more proudly than that of Arthur's first and kindly chief.

At this period, however, he showed not the slightest indication of brilliance or for being other than an ordinary pleasure-loving youth, and has even been described by contemporaries as a "shallow saucy stripling".²

But Colonel George Napier † (father of that famous family of soldiers who were later to serve with such distinction under this same 'shallow saucy stripling') thought otherwise, and after several conversations with him, delivered himself of the following prophetic utterance. "Those who

¹ *The Hamwood Papers*, p. 72.

² *Life of Sir Charles Napier*, Vol. I, p. 52.

* Lady Eileen Butler, 1754(?)-1829, and the Hon. Sarah Ponsonby, 1755(?)-1831. Two ladies who created a great sensation by running away from home and living together. These two ladies took up their abode in Llangollen, where they lived for fifty years. They were called the 'Ladies' by the people of Llangollen, and they were visited by many famous people of their age.

† Napier, George, 1751-1804, son of 5th Lord Napier of Murchiston. His second wife (and the mother of the famous soldiers, Charles, William and George Napier) was the famous beauty, Lady Sarah Lennox, with whom George III had been desperately in love. At the time of her second marriage she was the divorced wife of Sir Charles Bunbury.

think lightly of that lad are unwise in their generation : he has in him the makings of a great general.”¹

That there was the serious side of his nature as well as the frivolous was shown by his willingness to shoulder responsibility, for before he was twenty-one he took his seat in the Irish Parliament as a member for the family borough of Trim, and sometimes even spoke. His first recorded speech, it is interesting to note, was to support the address from the throne in favour of Roman Catholic Concessions, a significant incident in view of the fact that it was under his Premiership, thirty-six years later, in the English Parliament, that the Bill for Catholic Emancipation was finally passed. But nobody would then have guessed that this lad, “ruddy-faced and juvenile in appearance”, whose “address was unpolished” and who “evinced no promise of that unparalleled celebrity and splendour which he has since reached”,² would one day be Prime Minister of England. Yet the closing words of his first modest little speech are indicative of the principles which were to govern his public life. . . . “I trust,” observed the young orator, “that when the question shall be brought forward we shall lay aside animosities, and act with moderation and dignity, and not with the fury and violence of partisans.”³

In 1790 the Earl of Westmorland * succeeded the Marquess of Buckingham as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. This change, however, made no difference in Arthur’s prospects, for the new Lord-Lieutenant continued him as A.D.C., and life jogged along in the same carefree manner. He was happy, too, with the Westmorland family, as he had been with their predecessors, and formed with them warm ties of friend-

¹ *Life of Sir Charles Napier, Vol. I, p. 52.*

² *Barrington, p. 201.*

³ *Speeches of the Duke of Wellington in Parliament, Vol. I, p. 2.*

* Fane, John, 10th Earl of Westmorland, 1759-1841. Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland 1789-95. Master of the Horse, 1795-8. Lord Privy Seal 1798. Knight of the Garter, etc.

ship which were never broken, and to which the future further added by the marriage of his favourite niece* with Lord Westmorland's eldest son.

In 1791 Arthur obtained a captaincy in the 58th Regiment of Foot.

There is still nothing unusual to record about him; he was, we are told, "popular enough among the young men of his age",¹ but he showed not the slightest sign of brilliancy, and one of his contemporaries goes so far as to describe him as having a "vacant face",² and to predict that, "let who will get on in this world, *you* certainly will not".

Even the fair sex seemed sometimes to have found him a trifle boring, and it is on record that a lady who drove him out in her carriage to a picnic, took care not to repeat the experiment on the return journey, having found him, "a dull, silent young man".³ Years afterwards the lady reminded him of the occurrence: "I little thought," said she, "when I left you to find your way back with the fiddlers, that you were going to play first fiddle yourself."³

In 1792 Arthur exchanged into the 18th Light Dragoons.

Now somewhere about this time a young lady appears on the scenes, who found him anything but dull. This was the Hon. Catherine Pakenham, daughter of Lord Longford (2nd Baron),[†] a pretty little butterfly of the vice-regal circle, whose

¹ *Barrington*, p. 202. ² *Memoirs of Thomas Moore*, p. 6.

³ *Lionel Tollemache*, p. 237.

* Priscilla Wellesley Pole, daughter of William Wellesley Pole, (afterwards Lord Maryborough). In 1811 she married Lord Burghersh, the eldest son of the 10th Earl of Westmorland.

† Edward Michael Pakenham, 2nd Baron Longford. Died in 1792. Son of the 1st Baron Longford, whose widow was created Countess of Longford. The Countess of Longford, however, survived her son by two years so that he never became Earl. The title of Earl was taken by his eldest son on the death of his grandmother, the Countess of Longford, in 1794. It has often been erroneously stated that Catherine Pakenham was the daughter of the *Earl* of Longford.

flutterings led her into the young Captain's heart then in its most plastic and receptive condition.

And so for Arthur another milestone on the road of life is passed, a new and wonderful experience is opening out before him.

But alas, this pleasant dream was of short duration and into the Land of Enchantment crept the chilly shadows of parental authority and disapproval, for how could a young and impecunious captain expect to support a wife, and the daughter of Lord Longford at that? It was preposterous; the affair must stop. This was the parental decree. And because these were the days when parental authority was obeyed, the young lovers separated, closing behind them the gate of that happy country, which neither of them was ever to enter again. True, they were destined to be re-united, and to enter into the closest of human relationships, but never again to enter the Land of Enchantment, for Time had stolen the key.

And so poor Arthur was left smarting under the discipline of life, with the cup of happiness dashed from his lips just as he was beginning to taste it. But it was all part of the predestined plan; domestic happiness was not for him, who was called to wider fields of service.

But now the Wheels of Destiny begin to turn, bringing him to the next rung of the ladder shortly to be scaled. The process began with the restlessness of a disappointed lover desiring change of scene and a more absorbing employment, which caused him to resign his post in the vice-regal household and to purchase on April 30th, 1793, a majority in the 33rd Regiment.

His entry into this regiment marks a significant epoch in Arthur Wesley's life, and the 33rd may perhaps be considered as the cradle of his military greatness; for from the moment of entering it he became entirely absorbed in his profession, and settled down in earnest to prepare for that great career which lay in the womb of the future.

RÉSUMÉ OF CURRENT EVENTS REFERRING TO CHAPTER TWO

THE NETHERLANDS CAMPAIGN

IN 1793 England and Austria were at war with France, who had invaded the Netherlands.

England entered into the campaign in response to the Dutch appeal for help.

Austria was fighting to protect her interests in Belgium, or the Austrian Netherlands as it was then called.

The English forces were commanded by the Duke of York.

The campaign of 1793 ended badly for the Allies, who were being pushed steadily out of Belgium. The Austrians had received some crushing defeats, and the Duke of York was retreating along the Scheldt.

It was at this stage that reinforcements were sent out from England, and on June 6th, 1794, Lord Moira landed in Belgium with 7,000 men.

It is not to be wondered at that the campaign had proved unsuccessful, for owing to the pernicious system of recruiting prevalent in Great Britain at that period, no army could expect to give a good account of itself.

This method was to offer rank in the army to anyone who would provide a certain number of recruits. The consequence was that anything that could stand on two legs was gathered up, popped into the recruiting bag, and sent out—with little, and often no training—to take part in a campaign whose rigors called for nothing but the toughest and most efficient troops.

The effect of this system of recruiting upon the quality of the officers was equally disastrous. Pitch-forked into their

rank because of the number of men supplied, and not on account of their military knowledge, they were fitting heads to the chaotic hotch-potch they were supposed to command.

The whole Campaign was an example of disastrous incapacity. Exceptions there were, of course, both in regiments and officers, but they were unable to effect much in face of the complete lack of organization that existed.

Chapter Two

THE NETHERLANDS CAMPAIGN —FIRST DAYS IN INDIA

There is a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will.

SHAKESPEARE.

AMONGST Lord Moira's* 7,000 which landed in Belgium in June 1794 we shall find a regiment which was by no means a hotch-potch of incapacity, but a fine trim body of men, that under its young Colonel had earned the reputation of being "the best drilled and most efficient regiment within the limits of the Irish command".¹

This was the 33rd, now commanded by Arthur Wesley, upon whose welfare all the enthusiasm of his young and energetic mind had been bent. He had obtained the command on September 30th, 1793, and from that time the last vestiges of the 'saucy shallow stripling' disappeared from the public eye, and in its place the embryo of that great general of Colonel Napier's prophecy began to thrust its roots out into the soil.

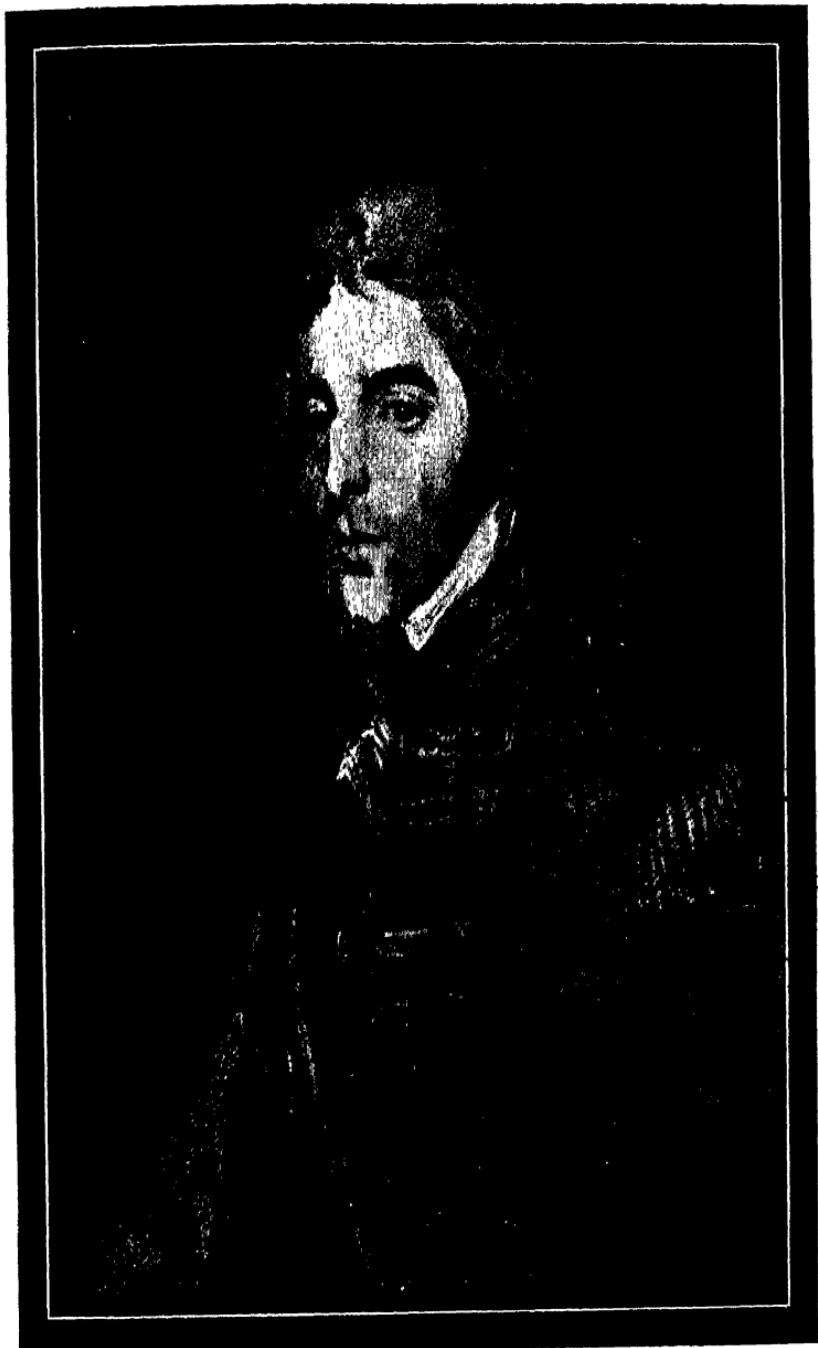
For another step upon the ladder had been gained. The boy had got a box of soldiers of his own, and he settled down with the glow of possession to make them move and act according to his will.

It was in the affair of Boxtel† on September 15th that Arthur had the first opportunity of showing his mettle.

¹ Gleig, p. 10.

* Hastings, Francis Rawdon, 1st Marquess of Hastings and 2nd Earl of Moira, 1754-1826.

† In Holland.



“THE YOUNG COLONEL OF THE 33rd.”

The British, having failed to take the village of that name, were falling back, and in so doing became entangled in a narrow lane.

The French cavalry, profiting by their confusion, prepared to charge, and matters looked serious for the entrapped Britishers.

Suddenly, a streak of red trickled across the path of destruction. It was Wesley's regiment, deployed in the nick of time, interposing itself between its comrades and annihilation. Steady and firm as a regiment of stone stood the 33rd in the face of the galloping avalanche of death, withholding their fire until the French were almost upon them. Then when the word of command rang out, a volley of British musketry brought down the foremost ranks of the charging cavalry, whilst those behind, carried forward by the impetus of their speed, rode headlong into their disabled comrades, and soon the French Hussars became a plunging, struggling mass.

The situation was saved, and by a young man of twenty-five entirely lacking in experience of active service.

It looked as if Arthur had chosen the right profession after all, and showed that his abilities only wanted opportunity to call them forth. But how far they were to lead him he little guessed; nor that twenty-one years later at his last battle, even as at his first, British infantry, stemming the flood-tide of French cavalry, at his bidding, would again arrest disaster, and by their heroic endurance pave the way to victory.*

Colonel Wesley's smart action did not pass unnoticed, and in January 1795 he was placed in command of a Brigade of three regiments which formed the rearguard of the retreating army.

But from October to January he was holding a post on the

* One of the outstanding characteristics of Waterloo was the indomitable resistance of the squares of British infantry in the face of repeated charges of the French cavalry.

Waal, where he seems to have been left entirely to his own devices with no instructions, and in complete ignorance of what was happening anywhere else. "We had letters from England," he stated in speaking of this period, "and I declare that those letters told us more of what was passing at headquarters than we learned from the headquarters themselves."¹

Life at this post seems to have been somewhat strenuous according to Colonel Wesley's description.

At present the French keep us in a perpetual state of alarm, [he wrote on December 20th] we turn out once, sometimes twice, every night; the officers and men are harassed to death, and if we are not relieved, I believe there will be very few of the latter remaining shortly. I have not had my clothes off my back for a long time, and generally spend the greatest part of the night upon the bank of the river, notwithstanding which I have entirely got rid of that disorder which was near killing me at the close of the summer campaign. Although the French annoy us much at night, they are very entertaining during the daytime; they are perpetually chattering with our officers and soldiers, and dance the *carmagnol* upon the opposite bank whenever we desire them; but occasionally the spectators on our side are interrupted in the middle of the dance by a cannon-ball from theirs.²

In January, Colonel Wesley was relieved from his post on the Waal, and took his place in command of the rearguard. The rest of the campaign resolved itself into a retreat across Holland, through the rigors of a winter of unusual severity.

It was a melancholy affair altogether, with none of the elation of victory to inspire the troops to rise above the terrible hardships they were called upon to endure.

The very elements, too, were against them, and the rivers which should have checked the French advance froze, so that the enemy was ever at their heels.

It came to an end at last, however, as all things must, and spring saw the weary British army (or what was left of it) at Bremen, from whence, as soon as the ice broke up, it embarked for England.

¹ *Stanhope*, p. 182.

² *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. XIII, p. 2.

What were the reflections of the young Colonel as he sailed homeward across the cold northern seas? Relief, principally, one would imagine, at having terminated an unsatisfactory task. Yet doubtless he turned to account those things which the campaign had taught him. "I learnt what one ought not to do," he used to say, "and that is always something."¹

The troops disembarked at Harwich, after which Colonel Wesley marched his regiment to Warley, then went on leave.

Our next glimpse of him is at Trim in Ireland, engaged in the amazing occupation of trying to become a civilian. It is not quite clear what prompted him to this course; it certainly was not inclination, for by now he had found his true vocation.

It might have been disgust at the way military matters were managed at that time, and despair of ever being able to push ahead in such a profession.

Or it might have been purely a matter of pounds, shillings and pence. The family finances were somewhat low, and it behoved Arthur to look about for a more lucrative profession.

Most people consider Kitty Pakenham to have been the outstanding motive, and doubtless she was, on the surface—or he thought she was—or hoped he thought she was. Yet one wonders if his desire to marry her was as strong then as when he was the Lord-Lieutenant's A.D.C. It was a different Arthur now; he had begun to settle down to the business of life, had begun to be his real self, and the real self never belonged to Kitty.

Be the reasons what they may, on June 25th, 1795, we find him applying to Lord Camden,* the Lord-Lieutenant, for a post on the Revenue or Treasury Boards.

If your Excellency and Mr. Pelham are of the opinion that the offices at those boards are too high for me, [he wrote] of course you will say so;

¹ *Stanhope*, p. 182.

* John Jeffreys Pratt, 2nd Earl and 1st Marquess of Camden, 1759-1840.

and as I am convinced that no man is so bad a judge of the justice of a claim as he who makes it, I trust you will not believe that I shall feel otherwise towards you than I have always felt, with sentiments of the greatest regard, and with an anxious wish to render you and your government every service in my power, in whatever situation I may be placed. . . . You will probably be surprised at my desiring a civil instead of a military office. It certainly is a departure from the line I prefer; but I see the manner in which military offices are filled, and I don't wish to ask you for that which I know you cannot give me.¹

What a fateful destiny lay in Lord Camden's answer. By what a hair's-breadth were the feet of Arthur Wesley turned from the path of obscurity, and forced back into the highway of life.

Many and varied have been the speculations as to whether or not he would have become famous had this request of his been granted. "But," as Sir Henry Taylor * sagely remarks, "whatever greatness the Duke might have wanted apart from circumstances, one element of greatness he must always have had, in the absence of all that is little."²

If anybody had made a bet on the chance of Arthur getting the post he was then seeking, the odds would certainly have been in his favour. His family had social and political influence, and Lord Camden was a personal friend.

The Powers of Destiny, however, would have none of it; a furious jerk of the wheel, and the job desired by the young Colonel went spinning into somebody else's lap. There was nothing for it, therefore, but a soldier's life.

One would now suppose that having been safely pulled back into his appointed path, nothing further could draw him out of it; yet the very next shake of the dice set his feet once more in the wrong direction and turned him West instead of East. For in the autumn of 1795 the 33rd was ordered to the West Indies.

¹ *Brialmont and Gleig*, Vol. I, p. 22.

² *Guests and Memories*, p. 325.

* Sir Henry Taylor, 1800-86. Poet and author.

Almost it would seem as if at the very outset something was trying to frustrate his great life's work.

Here was England's future hero heading for a dead end, devoid of opportunity, where the yellow spectre of fever* waited to claw him into a fameless grave.

But it was not to be, for each time he attempted to start, the winds of heaven drove him back.

That autumn the weather was particularly violent, and the expedition due to sail at the end of September could not put to sea before November. Forty-eight hours after sailing it was driven back in the teeth of a furious gale.

A few days later it started out again, only to be assailed by a raging hurricane which dispersed the convoy in all directions and kept Arthur a prisoner on the flagship which tossed helplessly for six weeks in the Channel, until driven back to the home shores again.

And though the 33rd was dispersed in different transports, yet the whole of it was blown back to England. There was not to remain the shadow of an excuse for sending its young Colonel on the wrong path again.

The authorities now changed their plans and the 33rd was ordered to India and set sail in April of the following year.

Everything is now going smoothly at last and Arthur Wesley is heading for that land where Fame is waiting to crown him with his first laurels.

It would seem so at first glance, yet aboard the transports conveying the 33rd overseas, there is no Arthur to be found. We must look for him at home instead, tied by the heels on a bed of sickness.

Having missed being buried in obscurity, or sent in the wrong direction, he now went near to being finished off

* ". . . We lost in three years in that pestilential climate some 80,000 men, one half dead and the rest unfitted for further service."

"Want of medical provision, and ignorance of tropical conditions, caused our soldiers to die of fever by thousands."—Trevelyan, *British History in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 87-9.

entirely by a serious illness. The doctor who attended him certainly thought poorly of his chances of recovery, though very highly of his prospects should he do so.

I have been attending a young man [he told a friend] whose conversation is the most extraordinary I have ever listened to. They speak highly of the talents of his elder brother . . . but depend upon it, if this young man lives, he must one day be Prime Minister.¹

Colonel Napier was not the only prophet ! *

There was, however, no question of Arthur dying, whatever the doctor thought ; his life's work lay before him, and he had to stay until it was completed. He therefore got well as quickly as possible, and June of that same year finds him at Portsmouth waiting to embark.

Richard was very sorry to lose him.

. . . I shall feel his loss in a variety of ways most bitterly, [he wrote to a friend on June 20th] and in none more than in the management of Trim,† where by his excellent judgement, amiable manners, admirable temper, and firmness, he has entirely restored the interest of my family.²

The ship in which Colonel Wesley sailed was a fast sailing frigate, and he overtook his regiment at the Cape. Here he remained until the month of November, entering with zest into the gaieties of the lively Cape station, a young man "all life and spirits",³ enjoying a pause in this land of flowers and sunshine, before passing onwards into that life of service which stretched interminably into the long future before him.

In November this pleasant holiday ended and the 33rd, accompanied this time by their Colonel, embarked for India, arriving at Calcutta in February 1797.

The next peep we get of Arthur is presiding at a dinner in Calcutta on St. Patrick's Day, "and doing the duties of the Chair with peculiar credit to himself".⁴

¹ *Ellesmere*, p. 161.

² *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. XIII, p. 3.

³ *Elers Memoirs*, p. 55.

⁴ *Hickey Memoirs*, Vol. IV, p. 154.

* In 1828 the Duke of Wellington became Prime Minister of England.
† The family borough.

On May 31st we find him going up to Chinsurah * to stay with Mr. Hickey † for the races, and on June 4th assisting at a convivial dinner party in Honour of the King's Birthday where, ". . . a very fine turtle and half of a tolerably fat deer",¹ washed down by "the best champagne . . . claret, hock, and madeira", was the fare the genial Hickey set before his guests. The party (a stag one) commenced operations at 3 p.m., when, having mellowed themselves into what their host described as a condition of "perfect harmony", they kept it up until three o'clock of the following morning.

It must not be supposed, however, that Arthur could do nothing but frivol, for his letters at this period, full of a comprehensive grasp of Indian affairs, show that he had also been employing his time in a more profitable manner, and had acquired an insight into the complicated conditions of that country, such as one would suppose to be possible only after years of residence.

Neither was the scope of his knowledge confined to India alone. The tentacles of his informative mind were constantly sucking in supplies of information from all directions. Thus it came about that, young as he was, men came to lean upon him, his advice was sought on many subjects, his opinions carried weight. He had not been two months in the country before we find him drawing up for the Governor-General, Sir John Shore,‡ a memorandum on a proposed expedi-

¹ *Hickey Memoirs, Vol. IV, pp. 160, 161.*

* A fashionable suburb of Calcutta.

† Hickey, William. A member of the legal profession, and a well-known figure in Calcutta Society of that period. The author of *Hickey Memoirs*.

‡ Sir John Shore, 1st Baron Teignmouth, 1751-1834, succeeded Cornwallis as Governor-General, October 1803. "The period of Shore's rule as Governor-General was comparatively uneventful. He implicitly obeyed the pacific injunctions of Parliament and the East India Company, and pursued a thoroughly unambitious and equitable policy

"He acquiesced in the successful invasion by the Mahrattas of the

tion to Manilla, of such excellence and practicability, that it is not surprising that he was eventually offered the command.

The document, a masterpiece of detailed information, was but the forerunner of that remarkable series of letters and memoranda, extending over a period of thirty-five years, which are to be found within the thirty-four volumes of the Duke of Wellington's despatches. Dealing with every subject under heaven, replete with wisdom, high principles and common sense, they will for ever be his greatest monument. The excellence of the earlier despatches is particularly remarkable. That they should have issued from the mind of so young a man is a matter of amazement. Almost it would seem as if on reaching India he leaped to sudden maturity ; as if the flower of his mind, which had opened slowly and unobtrusively, burst into the full splendour of its blooming in the rays of an Eastern sun. Strange that the land which produced lethargy in most Europeans should galvanize him into constructive energy. Yet so it was.

His very health, too, seems to have improved.*

Excepting a slight fever [he wrote his eldest brother, after he had been a few months in India] . . . I have been perfectly well ever since my arrival in this country. We have got through the hot weather, as it is called, and are now in the midst of the rains ; but I have not found either so oppressive as people in general have represented them.¹

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 16.*

Dominions of the Nizam ; he permitted the formation of a French subsidiary force . . . he thwarted Lord Hobart's efforts for extending the sphere of British influence . . . and he looked on passively while Tippoo was preparing for war. The only answer to these charges is that Shore faithfully obeyed his instructions, and nothing more could be expected of him."—*Dictionary of National Biography*.

* Sir A. Mackenzie, who had been at the College at Angers with Arthur Wesley, remembers that in those days he was "ailing and sickly." In after years the Duke of Wellington told Mackenzie that "India effected a total change in my constitution."—*Ellesmere, Personal Reminiscences of the Duke of Wellington*, p. 102.

But India was waiting for him, she needed him, even as he needed her, for each had something for the other.

To Arthur she gave the gift of opportunity, the chance to develop unhampered those vast potentialities which lay within him. She let him be at one and the same time, soldier, statesman, ruler and man of affairs. She allowed him to function through every department of his capacious mind. She gave full rein to his power of organization—she prepared him for the great rôle he was to play in the drama of the world.

In return for which he gave her eight years of strenuous service, protecting her peoples from oppression, guiding them to prosperity, and striving always to bring them peace.

In that first summer of his arrival Colonel Wesley's thoughts were principally bent upon the proposed expedition to Manilla, for though he had refused the command in favour of an officer senior to himself, whom he conceived had more claim to it, he was yet the moving spirit of the affair, and the responsibility for the preparations appeared to rest entirely in his hands. His despatches at this time contain several letters to the Governor-General on the subject, and his opinions, delivered with confidence and decision, were received by Sir John Shore with an extraordinary deference. Thus we find Arthur pointing out that the table allowance granted to the Captains of the Indiamen for the messing of the Army officers during the voyage, was insufficient. He also objected to the proposal to place the military sick under the command of the ships' surgeons instead of under their own, ". . . thus," he wrote, "I shall be deprived of that part of the superintendence over my corps which is most gratifying to me when they are embarked, and by exercising which I can render most service to the soldiers."¹

It was always with him a case of 'hands off the army', and even at this early stage he showed he would brook no interference from outsiders in the management of his men.

An order to place the troops under the command of the

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 22.*

ships' Captains * in the event of an action at sea drew from him such a forcible protest that the order was immediately withdrawn by an apologetic Governor-General.

Nothing could have given me greater concern [wrote Sir John Shore] than the tenor of your Letter ; as I am sorry to confess that I have inadvertently been the occasion of the Order issued by General St. Leger. . . . By what inadvertence it escaped me, I am at a loss to conceive ; but I am anxious to impress you with a conviction that inadvertence alone could have occasioned, on my part, any instructions hurtful to your feelings, or to those of the gallant gentlemen under your command.¹

All of which is very amazing, and goes to show that Arthur had already become a power in the land. Otherwise how should a young man of twenty-eight, but lately arrived in the country, dictate to the Governor-General, object to his orders, and actually cause them to be rescinded ?

What was it, one wonders, that made men defer to his opinion, and act according to his suggestions ? It had nothing to do with influence ; he was not at that time brother of the Governor-General ; his position was no different from that of any young officer of good connections serving in India. It was therefore due to some personal attribute. He was beginning to find himself, to feel the stirrings of that great driving power with which he was destined to move the world. He had acquired decision of mind, and self-confidence, which made him speak freely without fear of the consequences. He was beginning to implant his forceful personality upon those with whom he came into contact.

One who knew him at this period speaks of him as—

a handsome and most soldier-like man, with an eye that looked you through and through . . . cheerful, free of speech, and expansive among his particular friends, but rather reserved in general society . . . he would often sit in a corner of the splendid saloon in the government-

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 23.*

* It must be remembered that these were merchant captains, not the officers of the Royal Navy.

house, silent and abstracted for an hour at a time, and then pace up and down the room with quick impatient steps.¹

Before sailing for Manilla, Arthur heard that there was a chance of Lord Mornington being offered the post of Governor-General in place of Sir John Shore, who was about to retire.

This was a welcome piece of news as it had been one of Arthur's dreams for some time past.

You will have seen before now [he wrote his brother on July 27th] what my sentiments were respecting your coming to this country. In a letter which I wrote to you, I believe in the month of March, I pressed you to look to the Government of this country, and you may easily conceive that I am glad to find that there is so near a prospect of my wishes upon that subject being accomplished . . . I shall be happy to be of service to you in your Government ; but such are the rules respecting the disposal of all patronage in this country, that I can't expect to derive any advantage from it which I should not obtain if any other person were Governor-General.²

It is good to find one's dreams growing into realities, and Arthur had some pleasant thoughts to occupy him during the coming voyage.

Nevertheless he had been feeling a little hurt and neglected, for he complains on July 12th that, "I have not heard from England since I left it, which is extraordinary, considering that that was in June '96."³

This seems an incredible state of affairs, especially as he had only just recovered from a serious illness when he left home ; one can only hope that the letters had been written and miscarried. Arthur, however, could only judge by their non-arrival, which probably stirred up old hurts in his sensitive mind. For contrary to general belief, he was extremely sensitive, but he forged for himself an armour of invulnerability which enabled him to present an immovable front towards the world.

¹ *Macfarlane*, p. 6. ² *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. I, pp. 17, 18.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 16.

In youth, however, that armour was only forming, and he sometimes showed his hurts. It is nice to know that he eventually swallowed his feelings and family relations were re-established, for in 1800 we find Lady Mornington writing to her son Richard and referring to Arthur, "from whom I have lately received a most kind and affectionate letter".¹

During the voyage to Manilla an unfortunate incident occurred in connection with the young chaplain of the 33rd who one day got hopelessly drunk, and in that condition rushed out naked from his cabin, amongst the soldiers and sailors singing low and ribald songs.

When he sobered up and was informed of the spectacle he had made of himself his shame broke his heart. He shut himself up in his cabin and refused to see anyone, declaring he was ruined for ever.

The Captain of the ship becoming seriously concerned at the poor man's condition, sent a boat off for Colonel Wesley, who was in another ship.

The young Colonel came over immediately and handled the affair with tact and sympathy.

On boarding the chaplain's ship he went to see him in his cabin,

where, [says Hickey] finding him in the most melancholy and desponding condition, and positively refusing to take any food or nourishment, he talked of the folly of such behaviour, endeavouring to put the poor man in better humour with himself. He told him that what had passed was not of the least consequence as no one would think the worse of him for the little irregularities committed in a moment of forgetfulness: that the most correct and cautious men were liable to be led astray by convivial society, and no blame ought to attach to a cursory debauch . . .²

But though the chaplain expressed his gratitude to Colonel Wesley for "his humane conduct and kind intentions",³ he remained inconsolable and maintained that he was ruined for ever. "So seriously", continues Hickey, "did this error

¹ *British Museum Add. MS. 37416, folio 20.*

² *Hickey Memoirs, Vol. IV, p. 172.*

³ *Ibid.*

operate upon the poor man's mind that . . . in ten days after the circumstances had occurred he departed this life, having actually fretted himself to death." ¹

The expedition reached Penang in September, and was destined to proceed no further, being recalled owing to the movements of Tippoo, Sultaun of Mysore, which were causing anxiety to the Government of Madras.

The transports, however, were forced to lie off Penang until October, when the Monsoon ended. There were thus several weeks of idleness to while away. They were spent by Colonel Wesley in making a comprehensive study of the settlement which resulted in a most illuminating memorandum thereon. Dealing principally with the commerce of the island and its value as a trading centre, it might have been written by an Eastern merchant of ripe experience instead of by a young soldier of twenty-eight years of age.

The expedition returned in November, and the 33rd was once more stationed in Calcutta.

Arthur now showed that he could do other things beside writing memoranda, for we find him holding his own at the convivial gatherings prevalent among his associates at that period. It must be admitted too that he was one of the leading lights at these parties, having earned the reputation of possessing one of the strongest heads in Hindoostan. Hickey in his memoirs tells a story of one of these famous gatherings which affords an amazing example of the extent of our forefather's capacity.

During dinner [he says] we drank as usual, that is, the whole company each with the other at least twice over.* The cloth being removed, the first half-dozen toasts proved irresistible, and I gulped them down without hesitation ; at the seventh . . . I only half filled my glass, whereupon our host said, "I should not have suspected you, Hickey, of shirking such a toast as the Navy," and my next neighbour . . . having the bottle in his hand at the time, he filled my glass to the brim. . . . After

¹ *Hickey Memoirs, Vol. IV, p. 172.*

* There were eight present.

drinking two-and-twenty bumpers in glasses of considerable magnitude, the *considerate* President said, everyone might then fill according to his own discretion, and so *discreet* were all of the company that we continued . . . drinking nothing short of bumpers until two o'clock in the morning, at which hour each person staggered to his carriage or his palankeen, and was conveyed to town.¹

This phase of conviviality was of short duration in Arthur's career, and he soon became as renowned for his abstemiousness as he had formerly been for his strong head.

I know but one receipt for good health in this country, [he told his brother Henry at a later date] and that is to live moderately, to drink little or no wine, to use exercise, to keep the mind employed, and, if possible, to keep in good humour with the world.²

Somewhere between his return from Penang and the arrival of Lord Mornington in May, Arthur paid a visit to his friend Lord Hobart,* then Governor of Madras.

This trip was productive of much useful information, and he returned to Fort William † with a sound working knowledge of affairs at Fort St. George and the Presidency, which was of great service to the Governor-General.

Lord Mornington arrived in Calcutta on May 17th, 1798, ". . . bursting forth like a constellation in all his pomp and splendour",³ as Hickey puts it.

To Arthur the coming of this 'constellation' was an event of great happiness and satisfaction, for it was the coming of a dearly loved brother for whom perhaps at that time he cared more than for anyone in the world.

¹ *Hickey Memoirs*, Vol. IV, pp. 290, 291.

² *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. II, p. 501.

³ *Hickey Memoirs*, Vol. IV, p. 200.

* Lord Hobart, Robert, 1760-1816, 4th Earl of Buckinghamshire. From 1784 to 1788 was A.D.C. to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and from 1789 to 1793 was chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant. Not to be confused with the Marquess of Buckingham under whom he actually served as A.D.C., whose family name was Grenville. Lord Hobart had known Arthur Wellesley on the Vice-Regal staff in Ireland.

† The seat of Government at Calcutta.

The affection of these two was then at its height. There had been as yet nothing to try it. Lord Mornington held in the estimation of his younger brother just that place which caused him to be at his best. He was on a pedestal. In Arthur's eyes he was immeasurably above him, for the younger had not as yet found his feet, though he was very near to it. He did not realize that those qualities of mind and intellect so much admired in the elder, existed also in himself.

The time was to come when he was to find himself on an equality with his brother, when Lord Mornington was to find that Arthur had not only fulfilled, but transcended all that he had fondly hoped for him. It was the transcending that was hard to bear.

But for the moment there was nothing but harmony between them.

Lord Mornington had brought his brother Henry* out with him as secretary, so it was a very happy family party which assembled at Government House, the beginning of that brilliant partnership which worked such good in India. It is impossible to think of the Wellesley Government in the singular, it was a trinity, and all the finer for being made up of component parts, each depending on the other. Richard, as its head, created its policy, but he needed able assistants to carry it out. These he found in his own flesh and blood, men reared in the same school of thought as himself, and actuated by the same lofty motives. In Arthur he found not

* Wellesley, Henry, Baron Cowley, 1773-1847. Diplomatist. 1795 sat in Irish Parliament for Trim. 1797 went to India as Secretary to his eldest brother, the Governor-General. 1807 sat in English Parliament for Eye, Suffolk. 1809 Privy Councillor. 1809 went to Spain as Secretary to the Embassy during his eldest brother's Ambassadorship. In 1809 he succeeded his brother as British Minister in Spain, which post he held till 1822, being raised to the rank of Ambassador in 1811. Ambassador in Vienna 1823-31. Ambassador in Paris 1841-6. In 1803 he married Charlotte, daughter of the 1st Earl Cadogan, from whom he was divorced in 1810. He afterwards married Georgiana Charlotte Augusta, eldest daughter of the 1st Marquess of Salisbury.

only the ideal military commander, but a valued adviser, whilst Henry with his wise counsel and calm balance acted as a steady influence, and his presence during his tenure of office as private secretary was of inestimable value in keeping the wheels of government running smoothly. Never were rulers so disinterested ; in that lay the purity of this administration. Completely untainted with the mercenary principle, they were out to serve the public, black or white. Though never for a moment losing sight of Imperial interests, the Wellesley policy was to rule the country for the benefit of its inhabitants, and not for the ends of those who wished to exploit it for personal gain.

One of the first problems with which Lord Mornington had to deal was the affair of Tippoo, Sultaun of Mysore.

Tippoo, who had been beaten by the English in 1792, lived only for revenge, and had become the bogey of the East India Company's Government, his growlings and rumblings keeping them perpetually on the jump.

By the end of 1797 he had become a serious menace to British interests, having recovered from his defeat, and being equipped with a fine army officered by Frenchmen.

In 1798 he proposed to drive the British from India, and issued a proclamation to the Island of Mauritius * asking for troops to aid him in his object, the troops to be maintained at his expense.

As Tippoo was at that time in alliance with the British, this action called for some explanation.

Nevertheless for some months Lord Mornington did not attempt to seek it, hoping that Tippoo would think better of it and mend his ways.

But his intrigues with the French continued. The Governor-General therefore wrote politely to the Sultaun offering to send a friendly emissary—

Major Doveton, who is well known to you, and who will explain to

* A French possession, sometimes called *Île de France*.

you more fully and particularly the sole means which appear to myself, and to the allies of the Company, to be effectual for the salutary purpose of removing all existing distrust and suspicion, and of establishing peace and good understanding on the most durable foundations.¹

But the letter produced only evasion, and a correspondence then commenced between the Governor-General and the Sultaun of Mysore, which can only be likened to a game of battledore and shuttlecock, in which the Sultaun showed the greatest skill in keeping the shuttlecock always in the air. During this correspondence Tippoo plainly exposed the duplicity of his nature by heaping abuse upon that nation through whom he wished to drive the English from India.

... I possess the fervent hope [he wrote on one occasion] that the leaders of the English and the Company Bahauder, who ever adhere to the paths of sincerity, friendship, and good faith, and are the well-wishers of mankind, will at all times be successful and victorious; and that the French, who are of a crooked disposition, faithless, and enemies of mankind, may be ever depressed and ruined.²

This game of battledore and shuttlecock might have gone on for ever had not Lord Mornington's patience at last given out, and on January 9th, three months after the commencement of the correspondence, he set a time limit.

I trust [he wrote] that your Highness will favour me with a friendly letter in reply to this; and I most earnestly request that your reply may not be deferred for more than one day after this letter shall reach your presence; dangerous consequences result from the delay of arduous affairs.³

As Tippoo did not answer within the stipulated time, the Governor-General, after giving him a generous extension, on February 3rd ordered the army to enter Mysore territory and proceed to the siege of Seringapatam.

Tippoo's belated reply, when it did arrive on February 13th, showed how much satisfaction was to be expected from that quarter.

¹ *Marquess Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. I, p. 328.*

² *Ibid., p. 381.*

³ *Ibid., p. 400.*

Being frequently disposed to make excursions and hunt [it ran] I am accordingly proceeding upon a hunting excursion. You will be pleased to despatch Major Doveton (about whose coming your friendly pen has repeatedly written) slightly attended (or unattended).

Always continue to gratify me by friendly letters, notifying your welfare.¹

¹ *Marquess Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. I, p. 434.*

THE SITUATION OF AFFAIRS IN INDIA

AT THE TIME OF
THE MARQUESS WELLESLEY'S * GOVERNORSHIP

BRITISH India, when Lord Wellesley was Governor-General, was administered by the Honourable East India Company, who held it by Charter from the Crown.

The history of the Company begins in 1600, when a Company of London Merchants received a Charter from Queen Elizabeth to trade with India.

POSSESSIONS OF THE COMPANY AT THE TIME OF LORD MORNINGTON'S ARRIVAL IN 1798

West—Bombay, Salsette, Bassein, Surat and Bankot.

South-West—Malabar (separated from the above by Mahratta country and the kingdom of Mysore).

South—(Inland) Province of Baramahal, and fort and surrounding districts of Dindigul.

South to South-East—The coast-line of the Carnatic, with the exception of Tanjore. (The Carnatic inland was under British protection.)

East—The Circars and the provinces of Bengal and Behar. The former separated from the two latter by Mahratta territory. Politically these possessions were divided into three presidencies, Bombay, Madras, and Bengal.

* The Earl of Mornington was created Marquess Wellesley (in the Peerage of Ireland) after the taking of Seringapatam.

The Situation of Affairs in India

ADMINISTRATION

In India, the Governor-General and his Council represented the Company and were the supreme governing body in that country.

In England, the Court of Directors controlled the affairs of the Company and issued orders to the Governor-General.

The Court of Directors was, however, by the Act of 1784, subjected to the Board of Control representing the State, who possessed the supreme civil and military authority in India, and whose president was a Cabinet Minister.

The seat of the Government in India was Fort-William, Calcutta.

The Company had its own army, which though, of course, in allegiance to the King of England, was paid and officered by the Company.

The natives of India believed that the East India Company was an old woman, and that the Governors-General were her children. On one occasion when an Englishman arrived to visit Lord Wellesley, he was announced by the native servant in the following manner, "The Lord's sister's son and the grandson of Mrs. Company is arrived."¹

¹ *Torrens, p. 230.*

Chapter Three

THE CAMPAIGN OF MYSORE

It is better to see and to communicate the difficulties and dangers of the enterprise, and to endeavour to overcome them, than to be blind to everything but success till the moment of difficulty comes, and then to despond.

ARTHUR WELLESLEY.

THE previous chapter having outstripped the narrative we must now return to August 1798.

On the 19th of this month at five o'clock in the morning the ship *Fitz William* from Calcutta bound for Madras ran aground on the Saugor Reef. The weather was fair, the pilot still aboard. What then made her behave in this unseemly manner?

Was it because amongst her passengers she carried the person of Arthur Wellesley* who, with his regiment, was proceeding to Fort St. George?

Was it another incident in that chain of untoward circumstances that cropped up insistently in the early stages of his career and threatened to bar his forward progress?

He was getting on fast now, digging his roots firmly into the earth; unless something ended his career he bade fair to become a potent influence in the world of men.

The Saugor Reef lay in his path, perhaps it would do the job. It very nearly did.

* He now signed himself Wellesley instead of Wesley in accordance with his eldest brother's desire, who wished the family to revert to the older form of the name.

The ship struck this morning at about five upon what is called Saugor Reef [wrote Arthur to his brother Henry on August 19th] and remained fast until about one, when she was got off, I may almost say, by the bodily strength of the soldiers of the 33rd Regiment. She struck with great violence several times in almost every minute, and now leaks much.

If the weather had not been more moderate than it is usually we must all have been lost.”¹

Bad water, however, nearly effected what the Saugor Reef could not, and was, states Colonel Wellesley, “the cause of the death by dysentery of 15 as fine men as any we had, and of the sickness of nearly the whole regiment, myself not excepted”.²

Colonel Wellesley reached Fort St. George * on September 13th. To all intents and purposes he was there in command of his regiment, though in reality he had been sent by his brother on an unofficial mission to the Government of Madras.

The two main objects of this mission were to establish cordial relations with Lord Clive,† the new governor, and imbue him with Lord Mornington’s policy; and to see that adequate military preparations were going forward in case of hostilities with Tippoo of Mysore.

It was a task of extreme delicacy, for Colonel Wellesley had no official status.

With Lord Clive he immediately became on the very best of terms, and in some queer, unaccountable way seems to have taken the new governor completely under his wing.

He was extremely anxious that Lord Mornington should think well of his protégé, and nervously apprehensive of any harsh letters from the Government at Calcutta.

Lord C. [he wrote his brother Henry] opens his mind to me very freely upon all subjects. I give him my opinion, and talk as I would to

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 84.*

² *Ibid., Vol. I, p. 103.*

* The Seat of Government, Madras.

† Clive, Edward, 2nd Baron Plassey, and Earl of Powis (son of the famous Robert Clive, 1st Baron Plassey), 1754-1839.

M. The truth is, he does not want talents, but is very diffident of himself. . . . A violent or harsh letter from Fort William would spoil all. The conduct which I recommend is, perfect confidence with him upon all subjects, and I would extend it even to his government when it is safe to do so.¹

The Governor of Madras appears to have reciprocated these kindly feelings.

I cannot express to your Lordship [he wrote the Governor-General] the satisfaction I feel in the arrival of Colonel Wellesley. I find him so easy in his manners and friendly in his communications, that I cannot doubt but that the more I have the opportunity of cultivating his intimacy, the more I shall rejoice at the presence of a person so nearly connected with your Lordship, and so entirely possessed of your views and intentions.²

The rest of the Madras government, however, were harder nuts to crack. They did not approve of Lord Mornington's policy of settling once and for all with Tippoo of Mysore, dreading above all things the provoking of hostilities. The far-seeing Governor-General was considered a hot-headed fire-eater, and many difficulties were put in the way of military preparations.

Arthur's situation was a difficult one. "They [the Madras government] begin to suspect me," he informed his brother Henry, "and they keep everything secret. . . . Not being in office, I am obliged to proceed with great caution."³

As for his own opinions, they were in accordance with those of his brother, with this subtle difference, that Arthur actually hoped and believed that Tippoo might settle down without going to war, whereas it would seem that Lord Mornington never thought there was any chance of it.

First and last the younger had counselled peace. "In my opinion, if it be possible to adopt a line of conduct which would not lead immediately to war, provided it can be done

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 109.*

² *Marquess Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. I, p. 267.*

³ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 118.*

with honour", he had stated in June 1798, ". . . it ought to be adopted. . . ." ¹

"Your propositions to Tippoo ought to be moderate," he was advising in the following January, "at least so much as to make it probable that he will acquiesce in them . . ." ²

These pacific sentiments, however, had not prevented Arthur from doing his utmost to have the army ready for war, and his energies in this direction caused him to cross swords frequently with that "cursed institution", ³ the Madras Military Board. It is perhaps needless to say that he came out victorious from these encounters, but his position was not an enviable one.

With regard to my staying here, [he writes his brother Henry in October] I am perfectly satisfied to remain here as long as my presence may be necessary, although I consider my situation a very awkward one, and without remedy. I should not, however, wish M. to know that I feel it at all. ⁴

He was, however, soon to be relieved of his distasteful post, and in a way that was to cause him personal sorrow.

The assembling of the troops for the campaign in Mysore was going forward in the Carnatic, those at Arnee being in command of Colonel Hervey Aston of the 12th, a close personal friend of Arthur Wellesley.

On December 17th Colonel Aston fought a duel in which he was so severely wounded as to be unable to continue his duties, and Colonel Wellesley was hurriedly sent for, to fill his place.

He left Madras within an hour of receiving the news, and arrived at Arnee in time to see his friend alive.

"Ah, my dear Arthur," exclaimed the wounded man as Colonel Wellesley went in to him, "is it you? I shall now die happy." ⁵

A few days later he expired.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 55.*

³ *Ibid., p. 118.*

⁴ *Ibid., pp. 109, 110.*

² *Ibid., p. 153.*

⁵ *Elers Memoirs, p. 85.*

His death left Arthur's hands inconveniently full. On the top of his ordinary work he had to sit on the Court of Inquiry to investigate the circumstances of his friend's death, and to see that his last instructions were carried out.

In addition to being in command at Arnee, Colonel Wellesley was also placed in command at Wallajah-Nuggur, and had to go backwards and forwards between the two places. It is not surprising that he had hardly time to sleep. "I assure you", he told his brother, "that during two nights, whilst Colonel Aston's court of inquiry was sitting, I was in bed only two hours. . . ." ¹

As might be expected, Colonel Wellesley was the mainspring of the military preparations. Indeed, if it had not been for him the army would have been unable to take the field that season; for orders issued months before were still unexecuted, and everything was in a state of hopeless muddle.

And time was pressing, for unless the army could commence operations before the monsoon, when the river Cauvery protecting Seringapatam * would be in flood, the campaign would have to be abandoned until the following year, which would give the smouldering Tippoo time to erupt in unexpected places. Colonel Wellesley therefore hurled himself furiously upon the work in hand, his galvanizing energy exploding like a bombshell amongst the muddle-headed incapacity which surrounded him. He hustled, and made others hustle too, so that in the end the army was ready in time, though he had to borrow money, and sell his own horses to make it so. For amongst other difficulties with which he had to contend, was a shortage of money; ". . . the want of money in my camp was so great", he told his brother Richard, "that I was obliged to borrow from the officers of the army and to sell my own horses to find money to send off two detachments . . ." ²

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 167.*

² *Ibid., p. 192.*

* Tippoo's capital.

The whole thing had been run very fine, too fine, as Arthur well knew, and with his capacity for looking fearlessly on the adverse side of the picture he faced this fact, and endeavoured to impress it upon the Governor-General.

I am glad that you are prepared for a failure [he wrote] and that you have framed instructions accordingly. . . . Considering the lateness of the season, and that we are run almost to a day, it is possible for the enemy to throw such impediments in our way as to prevent us from laying siege to his capital in this year. . . .

My despondency goes thus far, and no farther; and as it has induced you to think it possible for us to fail, and to provide for such an event, I think I have done better to make it known to you, than to tell you that it was impossible that we should not succeed.

It is better [he continued] to see and to communicate the difficulties and dangers of the enterprise, and to endeavour to overcome them, than to be blind to everything but success till the moment of difficulty comes, and then to despond.¹

The larger Command that rested upon Arthur's shoulders and the amount of work it entailed never for a moment made him forget his beloved 33rd.

There is nothing about which I am personally so much interested as the proper equipment of the 33rd [he wrote during his absence from his regiment] and knowing perfectly well that if they were not provided with good lascars and good carriage for their tents, not only they would themselves be very uncomfortable during the campaign, but that they would be unable to render all the service which would be expected from them, and which in another case they would be capable of rendering, I applied above two months ago to two members of the Military Board to have the lascars and carriage allotted to the regiment. . . . This was promised; and if I had been in Fort St. George with the 33rd, I believe I may safely assert that it would now be as well equipped . . . as any regiment in the service. It is hard upon them that they should suffer because I am employed upon other duty. . . .²

On January 29th General Harris* arrived to take over

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, pp. 295-6.*

² *Ibid., p. 182.*

* Harris, George, 1st Lord Harris of Seringapatam and Mysore, 1740-1829. Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army 1796-1800.

command of the Army. He was extremely satisfied with Colonel Wellesley's work :

... The very handsome appearance and perfect discipline of the troops do honour to themselves and to him, [he wrote to the Governor-General] while the judicious and masterly arrangements in respect to supplies, which opened an abundant free market, and inspired confidence into dealers of every description, were no less creditable to Colonel Wellesley, than advantageous to the public service, and deservedly entitle him to my thanks and approbation.¹

Arthur, however, was much disappointed that these thanks were not made public.

The General expressed his approbation of what I had done [he told his elder brother] and adopted as his own all the orders and regulations I had made, and then said that he should mention his approbation publicly, only that he was afraid others would be displeased and jealous . . .

As in fact there is nothing to be got in the army but credit, and as it is not always that the best intentions and endeavours to serve the public succeed, it is hard that when they do succeed they should not receive the approbation which it is acknowledged by all they deserve. I was much hurt about it at the time, but I don't care now, and shall certainly continue to do everything to serve General Harris, and to support his name and authority.²

Colonel Wellesley was as good as his word, and soon forgot his temporary disappointment, for he liked General Harris, and had already adopted a protective attitude towards his commanding officer, much in the same way as he had done with the Governor of Madras, resenting strongly any encroachments upon his authority and prerogatives.

Even the Governor-General himself was not excepted, and a suggestion that he should accompany the forthcoming expedition was strongly negatived.

I am entirely ignorant of the objects which you may have in view in coming, which may certainly counterbalance the objections I have to the measure ; but it appears to me your presence in camp, instead of giving confidence to the General, would in fact deprive him of the command of

¹ *Lushington*, p. 250.

² *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. I, p. 199.

the army. . . . Everything which the General might think necessary will be thwarted and canvassed, not by you probably, but by those whom you will naturally wish to consult. . . . All I can say upon the subject is, that if I were in General Harris's situation, and you joined the army, I should quit it.¹

So wrote the downright and plain-spoken Arthur, no respecter of Governor-Generals, be they brothers or otherwise. But the great Richard took it meekly, for by now his younger brother was becoming a necessity to his government.

I entirely concur in your opinion respecting the impropriety of my taking the field with the army, [was his reply] my judgement was always the same as yours; but certain persons made such a clamour on the subject, that I wished to learn how you thought upon it.²

So the army moved forward unencumbered by viceregal splendour; not that this would have made any appreciable difference, since, "when all were together", says Colonel Wellesley, "there was a multitude in motion which covered about eighteen square miles."³

In this multitude he himself commanded a division consisting of his own regiment the 33rd, and the troops of the Nizam of Hyderabad,* the latter command causing great jealousy to Major-General Baird, who wished for it himself. Apart, however, from the fact that the native Commander had specially asked for Colonel Wellesley, the command could not have been given to General Baird † since the Nizam, who provided the pay, had stipulated that the British officer

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 187.*

² *Ibid., p. 188.* ³ *Ibid., p. 205.*

* An ally of the British.

† Sir David Baird, 1757-1829. General. Served in the war against Hyder Ali (father of Tippoo Sultaun), 1780. Was taken prisoner, and remained in captivity for three years and eight months in most terrible circumstances. Served under Lord Cornwallis against Tippoo Sultaun, 1792. Commanded the force which captured Pondicherry in 1793. Served in Peninsular War under Sir John Moore, and was wounded at the battle of Coruña.

commanding his contingent was to be no higher than a Colonel.

By April 5th the allied army had reached its objective and taken up a position before Seringapatam, "a strong, a healthy, and a brave army", wrote Colonel Wellesley with satisfaction, "with plenty of stores, guns, etc, etc., and we shall be masters of his [Tippoo's] place before much more time passes over our heads".¹ He was now in the best of spirits and doubts of success had entirely disappeared.

A few hours later, however, his spirits were to be considerably dampened, and all because of a nasty dark little wood, with a treacherous, twisty watercourse running through it, which he was ordered to take that night, without having had an opportunity of reconnoitring it by daylight. This was the famous Sultaun Pettah Tope, which has made so much noise in the world, for it provided an occasion on which Arthur Wellesley failed! It was in reality a perfectly simple affair, but it gave the gossips an opportunity to pick holes in the Governor-General's brother, an opportunity for which they had long been thirsting. The principal actors, however, were quite unaware that anything out of the ordinary had occurred.

On the night of the 5th we made an attack upon the enemy's outposts [wrote Colonel Wellesley to his eldest brother] which, at least on my side, was not quite so successful as could have been wished. The fact was that the night was very dark, that the enemy expected us, and were strongly posted in an almost impenetrable jungle. We lost an officer killed, and others and some men wounded (of the 33rd); and at last, as I could not find out the post which it was desirable I should occupy, I was obliged to desist from the attack, the enemy also having retired from the post. . . .

I got a slight touch on the knee, from which I have felt no inconvenience . . . and I have come to a determination, when in my power never to suffer an attack to be made by night upon an enemy who is prepared and strongly posted, and whose posts have not been reconnoitred by daylight.²

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 208.*

² *MS. Add. 22, 200, p. 100.*

As for General Harris, he had encountered military failures before and his chief feeling was sympathy for Arthur's disappointment.

Remained under great anxiety till near twelve at night [he records in his diary] from the fear our troops had fired on each other . . . Near twelve, Colonel Wellesley came to my tent in a good deal of agitation, to say he had not carried the Tope. It proved that the 33rd, with which he attacked, got into confusion, and could not be formed, which was a great pity, as it must be particularly unpleasant to him. Altogether, circumstances considered, we got off very well.¹

It is a significant fact that General Baird, who had been ordered to clear the Tope the night before (but on entering found no enemy there) lost his way, and nearly landed himself in the enemy's camp. This, too, when he had the whole place to himself and was entirely unmolested. "He missed his road coming back," says General Harris, "although one would have thought it impossible; no wonder night attacks so often fail."²

On the following morning, General Harris ordered another attack on the Tope, and very naturally gave Colonel Wellesley the opportunity of retrieving his misfortune of the previous night.

By some mischance the orders were not conveyed to him, and when the troops were assembled, no Colonel Wellesley appeared to lead the attacking column, for he was in his tent awaiting orders. This was a toothsome morsel for the palates of the gossips, already chewing delightedly over his failure of the preceding night.

They were soon to be disappointed, for as the troops were moving off Colonel Wellesley appeared, having only just been warned for duty. He took over immediately, marched his column to the attack, and in a very short time was in possession of the Tope. Thus ended perhaps the most insignificant affair that has ever been recorded in history. And indeed it would never have been recorded at all, had

¹ *Lushington*, pp. 294, 295.

² *Ibid.*, p. 295.

it not been for the gossip of the malicious minded, who made such a song about it that its echoes have come reverberating down the years.

Every kind of aspersion seems to have been cast upon the Governor-General's brother, even going so far as to assail his personal courage;

... so poisonous [says an officer of the East India Company] is the breath of slander ... that it required years of victory to wipe away the impressions then received from the minds of those who are more ready to listen to evil than to good report.¹

The siege of Seringapatam lasted one month. It ended on May 4th when the British, under the command of Major-General Baird, stormed and took the town, and Tippoo Sultaun was killed.

On the following day, Colonel Wellesley, being the next officer down for duty, was sent in to take over from Baird who had requested to be temporarily relieved. Thus the task (no light one) of restoring order rested upon the young Colonel's shoulders.

It was impossible to expect [he wrote the Governor-General] that after the labour which the troops had undergone ... they should not have looked to the plunder of this place. Nothing therefore can have exceeded what was done on the night of the 4th. Scarcely a house in the town was left unplundered. ... I came in to take the command on the morning of the 5th, and by the greatest exertion, by hanging, flogging, etc. etc., in the course of that day I restored order among the troops, and I hope I have gained the confidence of the people.²

By May 6th Colonel Wellesley had matters well in hand.

Plunder is stopped, [he reports to General Harris] the fires are all extinguished, and the inhabitants are returning to their houses fast. . . .

It is absolutely necessary [he adds] that you should immediately appoint a permanent garrison, and a commanding officer to the place; till that is done, the people will have no confidence in us, and everything must be in confusion. That which I arrange this day, my successor

¹ *Twelve Years' Military Adventure, Vol. I, p. 82.*

² *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 212.*

may alter tomorrow, and his the next day ; and nothing will ever be settled.¹

In accordance with this request, General Harris appointed a garrison to Seringapatam, and placed Colonel Wellesley permanently in command.

This appointment gave great offence to Major-General Baird, who conceived that he should have had it, seeing that he had taken the place ; and he voiced his feelings violently to General Harris.

Having been honoured with the conduct of the assault [he wrote] and having executed that duty to your satisfaction, I naturally concluded that I should have been permitted to retain the command of Seringapatam or, at least, that I should not be superseded in it by a junior officer. . . . When, on a former occasion, Colonel Wellesley was appointed to the command of the detachment serving with his Highness the Nizam, while I remained in charge of a brigade, you informed me that matters of a political nature made it necessary to have that officer with the Nizam's Army. Although I severely felt the appointment of a junior officer to so distinguished a command while I remained in an inferior station, I submitted to the necessity which you informed me dictated the measure ; but this second supersession I feel most sensibly, as it must have the effect of leading his Majesty and the Commander-in-Chief in England * to believe I am not fit for any command of importance. . . . I request that copies of this letter may be transmitted to His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, for the information of His Majesty, that, at the same time he is informed of my having been twice superseded by Colonel Wellesley . . . that he may be satisfied the measure was dictated by necessity, and not by want of capacity on my part to fill the situation.²

The above was somewhat akin to insubordination, but it was written in a moment of anger, and General Harris magnanimously gave permission for its withdrawal. It is here quoted as showing David Baird's feelings at this time. They are very natural and understandable. He could not be expected to see that the taking of a city does not presuppose

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. I., pp. 36, 37.*

² *Lushington, p. 411.*

* The Duke of York.

the ability to govern it, and that General Harris could not appoint a man to a post merely because the applicant conceived he had a right to it.

General Harris was in honour bound to select for capacity, since the welfare of a province hung upon his choice. It could not be helped that the capacity was possessed by the Governor-General's brother.

But apart from Arthur Wellesley's suitability for the post, there were two facts, amongst others, that rendered David Baird ineligible for it. He had not the knack of handling natives, and also he had been for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years the prisoner of Hyder Ali (Tippoo's father) at Seringapatam. The memory of the terrible sufferings he and his comrades had endured might have rendered impartiality of judgment a matter of difficulty.

There were plenty of people, however, who saw matters from David Baird's point of view, and the tongues of gossips, already busy over Arthur's failure at the Sultaun Pettah Tope, clacked louder than ever.

Ill-intentioned people talk nonsense, I hear, [wrote General Harris to the Governor-General] of your brother's appointment to command in Seringapatam ; but I can defend it on principles most militarily correct . . . Colonel Wellesley was the next officer to relieve Baird, who had requested to be relieved. So little did I think of any particular person at the time, that Roberts was named by Turing * as next for duty, and agreed to by me, when Turing corrected himself, and said Colonel Wellesley was next. "Then let him go," was my answer. He was afterwards permanently appointed by me, from my thinking him more equal to the particular kind of duty than any other officer in the army.¹

To which the Governor-General made reply.

You know that I never recommended my brother to you . . . and I believe you know also that you would not have pleased me by placing him in any situation in which his appointment could be injurious to the public service. My opinion, or rather knowledge and experience, of

¹ *Lushington, p. 437.*

* The deputy-adjutant-general.

his discretion, judgement, temper, and integrity, are such, that if you had not placed him in Seringapatam, *I would* have done so of my own authority, because I think him in every point of view the most proper for that service.¹

And so because two leaders were public spirited enough to ignore calumny, Mysore became possessed of a Governor under whom for six happy years she was to remain in a state of unprecedented prosperity.

It is satisfactory to learn that the course of time softened Baird's injured feelings and that later on he saw matters in their right proportion, and all rancour towards Arthur Wellesley disappeared.

It is the highest pride of my life [said he ten years later] that any body should ever have dreamed of my being put in the balance with him. His fame is now to me joy, and I may almost say glory, and his kindness to me and mine has all along been most distinguished. I know both him and myself now.²

The Command of Seringapatam was of extreme importance, the most important post at that particular time in all Mysore. It required the brain of a statesman as well as a soldier. In the hands of the Military Governor of Seringapatam lay the peace and order of the province. The position was virtually that of a Governor of a state, and in point of fact Colonel Wellesley held his post under the Governor-General, communicating with him direct and not through the military board. His position in August of that same year (1799) was further strengthened by his military appointment as Commander of the Forces in Mysore.

Mysore was then in the throes of reconstruction, and it was fortunate for the country that the right man appeared to take the helm. A child of five sat on the throne (the representative of the old Hindu dynasty, formerly deposed by Hyder Ali), set up in the place of his fathers after the British victory. This fact alone might have been productive of internal intrigue and dissension, since the late Sultaun was a Mahomedan.

¹ *Lushington*, pp. 437, 438.

² *Lady Shelley*, Vol. II, p. 25.

Nevertheless, Arthur Wellesley steered safely through these troubled waters, and was always particularly popular with the Mahomedan population.

Mysore was now a state under British protection. For the administration of its affairs the Governor-General appointed a Commission of five, consisting of General Harris, Colonel the Hon. A. Wellesley, the Hon. Henry Wellesley, Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkpatrick,* and Lieutenant-Colonel Barry Close † (the latter also holding the post of British Resident at the court of the Rajah of Mysore).

One of the first matters which the Commission was called upon to settle was the disposal of the family of the late Sultaun. It was obvious they could not remain at Seringapatam, so it was proposed to send them to Vellore, where they were to be housed as became their rank and station, and were to receive a liberal monetary allowance.

The details of this painful, but indispensable, measure [stated the Governor-General to the Commissioners of Mysore] cannot be entrusted to any person more likely to combine every office of humanity with the prudential precautions required by this occasion than Colonel Wellesley; and I, therefore, commit to his discretion, activity and humanity, the whole arrangement, subject always to such suggestions as may be offered by other members of the Commission.¹

¹ *Marquess Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. II, p. 20.*

* Kirkpatrick, William, 1754-1812. Colonel. He had served for many years in India and had a great knowledge of Indian affairs. Went to the Cape for his health in 1797, where he met Lord Mornington, then on his way to India, who took him back to India as his confidential secretary.

† Sir Barry Close, d. 1813. Major-General. Commenced his service as a cadet of infantry at Madras 1771. Served against Hyder Ali in the war of 1780-2. Present at the Siege of Tellicherry 1790-2, was Deputy-Adjutant-General with Lord Cornwallis's army, and present at the first siege of Seringapatam. Present at siege and capture of Seringapatam in 1799, as Adjutant-General. Resident at Mysore 1799-1801, and afterwards at Poona. A fine character and an efficient public servant. He is described by Arthur Wellesley as "the ablest man in the Company's army". *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 95.*

The Governor-General's choice appears to have been justified, for it would have been impossible to improve on the cordiality of the relations which came to exist between Colonel Wellesley and his charges. They were never allowed to feel in the position of conquered foes. Even the necessary precaution of placing guards over the princes at Vellore was made to appear as a guard of honour.

... I recommend that they should not be allowed to perceive that they are guarded [wrote Colonel Wellesley to the Governor-General]
 ... I think it would be advisable to have as much state as possible about them ; to begin by not offering them to go out without having orderlies and guards to attend them, to keep off the mob and to do them honour.¹

From the first Arthur Wellesley showed a peculiar capacity for entering into the feelings of those he governed ; he seemed to feel with them. No Mahomedan could have been more tenacious of the privacy of his harem than was Colonel Wellesley over that of the late Sultaun, and a report that he had ordered the zenana to be searched distressed him greatly.

I have read a paragraph in the Bombay newspaper [he wrote his eldest brother] stating that application had been made to me for leave to search the zenana in the palace for treasure, and that leave having been granted, the zenana had been searched. As I know that these newspapers go to England, and that people will believe that I allowed that search to be made, which, in my opinion, and in the opinion of every well-thinking man, was a very improper one, I wish that some means could be devised of making those (of whose good opinion one is most anxious), acquainted with the true state of the case. The truth is, that an order came to me from the Commander-in-Chief through the Adjutant-General, to allow the zenana to be searched by the prize agents. The application for it never went through me, as it ought according to the regular forms ; and not only I never applied for it, but I postponed obeying it for several days, in hopes that I should either prevail upon the General to recall it, or that I might convince the prize agents that there was no treasure in the zenana . . . I had nothing to do with it excepting that I obeyed the General's order, and that I took every precaution to render the search as decent and as little injurious to the feelings of the ladies as possible.²

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 251.*

² *Ibid., pp. 277, 278.*

His delicacy of feeling even went so far as refusing to allow the new Rajah, a child of five, to be housed in Seringapatam until the late Tippoo's harem had been removed. "It is impossible to musnud him at Seringapatam," he wrote the Governor-General, "because if we do, we must fix him in Tippoo's palace along with Tippoo's women, which would be cruel. . . ." ¹

Arthur had not been long at Seringapatam before he found this command, so much coveted by Baird, was no asset from a monetary point of view, and that his expenses were far in excess of his pay.

Since I went into the field in December last [he wrote the Governor-General] I have commanded an army with a large staff attached to me, which has not been unattended by a very great expense, particularly lately. About six weeks ago I was sent in here with a garrison, consisting of about half the army and a large staff, and I have not received one shilling more than I did in Fort St. George. The consequence is that I am ruined . . . I assure you that since December I have in some months spent five times, in others four times, more than I received ; and an extraordinary circumstance, which could happen in no other country, is that I have frequently signed the bills of officers under my command who were living upon me by the customs of the service, and who received nearly half as much more than I did.²

Yet in spite of this financial debility Arthur offered in the same letter to pay Richard back out of his share of the Seringapatam prize, for the money he had lent him for the purchase of his Lieutenant-Colonelcy, an offer which the elder with great generosity refused. ". . . No consideration", he wrote, "can induce me to accept payment of the sums which I have formerly advanced for you. I am in no want of money, and probably never shall be: when I am, it will be time enough to call upon you."³

Towards the end of August Colonel Wellesley left Seringapatam and was absent for three months with the army. During part of this time he was engaged in checking the depreda-

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 245.*

² *Ibid., pp. 246-7.*

³ *Ibid., p. 246.*

tions of Doonda Punt Goklah, a Mahratta chief who had seized some of the frontier forts of Mysore and invaded the British province of Soonda.

Wellesley's methods were bloodless, and consisted in the writing of persuasive letters, backed by judicious massing of troops. They gained Goklah as an ally of the British.

The absence of the Governor of Seringapatam in nowise prevented him from directing the affairs of that place by correspondence, its smallest details receiving the same scrupulous attention as did the military measures with which he was for the moment engaged. Even the ladies of the zenana who had been quarrelling amongst themselves received a message.

I beg [wrote Colonel Wellesley to Colonel Sherbrooke *] that you will desire my moonshee to write a letter to the ladies in the mahal, and state how much concerned I am that all my endeavours to render their situation comfortable to themselves and respectable in the world should have failed from their dissensions ; that I intreat that they will live together as friends till I return to Seringapatam, when any grievance or inconvenience that they may feel will be removed.¹

A piece of advice that could only have issued from the brain of a masculine optimist ! Arthur as arbiter of the harem assumes a daring rôle ; but Mysore provided him with an infinity of variety, and whatever came to hand was tackled with the same degree of earnestness, from a military campaign to the zenana wardrobe.

There was one luxury, however, the heartless Arthur denied the ladies of the zenana, and that was husbands, though he sympathizes with the deprivation.

The Princesses [he stated decisively] ought not to be allowed to marry. A Mussulman would found a pretension either to a large pension, or even to the government of Mysore, upon his connexion with one of Tippoo's daughters. It is as well to avoid this, and therefore these ladies must continue in their present state. They ought, however, to

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 322.*

* In command at Seringapatam during Colonel Wellesley's absence.

Age 30-31] Care of the late Tippoo's Family [1799-1800

have any additional comfort or allowance which can make them happy, and reconcile them to their fate.¹

But to the Princes he was shamelessly generous. "There ought to be no restriction whatever upon the Princes," he says, "to take as many women, either as wives or concubines, as they may think proper. They cannot employ their money in a more harmless way . . ." ²

Colonel Wellesley took the responsibility of this family most seriously, and, overloaded with work as he was, he would not ask to be relieved from it, nor, much as he desired to do so, would he personally forward to Government the application of an officer who desired the post of looking after the late Sultaun's affairs.

I was much flattered by the confidence reposed in me with regard to this family [he wrote] . . . for which the only return I can make is to pay the greatest attention to them as long as they remain here. It would appear that I was not sensible of the confidence of Government if I were to desire to get rid of the charge, to which nothing but trouble is attached . . .³

The Governor of Seringapatam remained in residence from November 21st till the end of the following May (with the exception of a three weeks' trip to Cannanore), deeply occupied with the multitudinous and varied affairs which fell under his jurisdiction. Even the spiritual welfare of his little kingdom was not forgotten, and he petitioned Government for a garrison chaplain.

There are a large body of European troops here [he wrote to Josiah Webbe, the Secretary of Government] many officers, the resident and gentlemen of his family,* and it appears very desirable that they should have the advantage of regular divine service, and other duties which a clergyman would perform.⁴

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. III, p. 309.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, p. 443.*

⁴ *Ibid., p. 403.*

* "Family" in this instance means personal staff. The staffs of military, or government officials were at this period referred to as their "families".

Towards the end of May Colonel Wellesley went on active service again, and took the field against the rebel Dhoondiah Waugh,* who had assembled a large force on the northern Mysore frontier, and recommenced a career of pillage and plunder. It was to be war to the death this time, for Dhoondiah was becoming a serious menace to the peaceful settlement of the country, and Colonel Wellesley had a free hand to pursue him anywhere and everywhere until he caught him.

But Dhoondiah was hard to catch, for his one aim was to avoid conclusions with Colonel Wellesley. Subsisting entirely by plunder, he was able to move with the greatest rapidity. The chase lasted for three months over a hilly country, cut up by rivers, with many hill fortresses. At last, however, the bandit was cornered in the Nizam's territory, and brought to bay at Conaghall. He was in a good position when Colonel Wellesley came upon him at seven o'clock in the morning of September 10th, strongly placed with the village of Conaghall on his left flank and rear. He was also superior in numbers, having 5,000 to Colonel Wellesley's 1,200, for the latter, hearing of Dhoondiah's proximity, had pushed ahead with the cavalry only, the infantry being 15 miles in the rear. Nothing, however, was going to stop Arthur now that he had at last come to grips with his slippery foe, so forming his four regiments into one long line he placed himself at their head, and led them forward at the charge. The enemy did not stay to receive it, but broke and fled in all directions, joyously pursued by Wellesley's victorious cavalry, and Dhoondiah himself was killed.

There is a beautiful aftermath to his slaying, which lifts the veil from the practical and energetic exterior of his destroyer, and shows a glimpse of the real man beneath.

Amongst Dhoondiah's baggage was found his little son,

* Dhoondiah Waugh had been a prisoner of Tippoo Sultaun. He was liberated by the British, and repaid this clemency by gathering together a freebooter army with which he ravaged the districts under British protection, committing many acts of atrocious cruelty.

or adopted son, Salabut Khan, a child of five, who, fortunately for himself, was taken to Colonel Wellesley's tent, and from that moment his future was assured. With a fine impulse of generosity begotten of his innate love and understanding of children, and by that peculiar softness of mood which always assailed him after a battle, he then and there undertook to provide for the maintenance and education of the child, a charge which he fulfilled faithfully until the end of the boy's life.

The death of Dhoondiah freed the borders of Mysore and adjacent countries from the menace of a dangerous and organized bandit horde.

His task now being accomplished, Colonel Wellesley drew his forces south, and arrived at Seringapatam at the end of November.

He was, however, soon to be on the move again, for events had been brewing up in the outer world, which were to have an effect upon his career. He was in fact about to quit the sunny shores of happiness, and to sail into a place of contrary winds and ruffled waters.

That outside event which for the moment impinged itself upon his fortunes was the French invasion of Egypt, which resulted in a force being despatched from India via the Red Sea to co-operate with the British in Egypt.

*Chapter Four*THE STORY OF THE RED SEA
COMMAND

OR

COLONEL WELLESLEY'S
SUPERSESSION

We ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own hurts which the wise powers
Deny us for our good; so find we profit
By losing of our prayers.

SHAKESPEARE.

THIS part of Arthur Wellesley's story needs very carefully telling, since in general it has been misrepresented to his disadvantage. It is therefore here set out at some length in order that the world may have an opportunity of passing an impartial judgment thereon.

The story of the Red Sea Command in a nutshell is as follows :

That the Governor-General appointed his brother Colonel Wellesley to this command.

That Major-General Baird wished to have it, and protested against Colonel Wellesley's appointment.

That Lord Wellesley yielded and superseded his brother.

That his brother resented the supersession and felt he had been unjustly treated.

The impression that the world has so far received of this affair is that the supersession was unavoidable, owing to the

increased number of troops eventually employed, which necessitated the command being given to a General officer, and that therefore Colonel Wellesley's resentment was unreasonable.

Now whatever Arthur's faults may have been there was nothing unreasonable or illogical in his character. He would not have suffered as he suffered in this affair for a fancied injustice. He was far too good a soldier to resent being superseded on technical grounds. There must therefore have been good reasons for him to have felt so bitterly about it.

An intensive study of the correspondence relating to this affair has confirmed the above opinion. It has revealed amongst others the following facts :

- (a) That Colonel Wellesley was appointed to this command unconditionally, and irrespective of any increase of the forces.
- (b) That the force eventually placed under General Baird was no larger than that originally entrusted to Colonel Wellesley.

The Red Sea Command, for want of a better name, was a pet scheme of the Governor-General. It was, in effect, to assemble a force at Trincomalee in the island of Ceylon to be ready to act immediately wherever its services might be required ; the chief objects which Lord Wellesley had in view being the repelling of a possible attack by the French on India, or a co-operation in Egypt with any British force which might be sent against the French in that quarter. Admiral Rainier was to support by sea.

The instructions concerning this command were as follows :

Instructions to Vice-Admiral Rainier, October 22nd, 1800 (Extract)

... It appears to me desirable to concentrate the strength of your Excellency's squadron, together with the largest disposable force of Europeans, which my limited means will enable me to spare, at some point from which they may be ready to issue with promptitude and facility either to the western coasts of the peninsula of India, or to the Red Sea, or to any other quarter which the enemy may menace during the north-eastern moonsoon . . .

I have reason to expect that I shall be enabled to assemble this force at Trincomalé on or before the middle of the month of December; and it is my intention that it should be commanded by Colonel Wellesley, and that Colonel Champagné should be the second in command.¹

Instructions to Colonel Wellesley of November 5th, 1800 (Private)

To proceed up the Red Sea in order to co-operate with any British force which may be employed in Egypt from the side of the Mediterranean.

To proceed to any point which the French may menace in India, especially on the western side of the peninsula.

The Governments of Fort St. George and Bombay are ordered to hold in readiness whatever troops they can spare, to act in concert with the force assembled at Trincomalee, either in Egypt or in any part of India; and the forces holden in readiness at each of these Presidencies respectively, will be subject to your command. . . .

Intelligence which I have received has satisfied me that a blow might now be struck, with every prospect of success, against the Isle of France.* If the state of my accounts from Europe and Egypt should leave me at liberty to make such an attempt at the close of the month of December my anxious wish is, that you should proceed, on or about the 25th of December, from Trincomalee directly to the Isle of France . . .²

These instructions were followed on November 14th by the official orders, which reiterated the above, paragraph 4 placing Colonel Wellesley in command of the Expeditionary Force at Trincomalee, with Colonel J. Champagné, of His Majesty's 80th regiment, as second in command.

On November 15th official instructions concerning the proposed expeditionary force were also issued to Lord Clive, Governor of Madras, who in paragraph 16 was enjoined to draw together, at a convenient point, as large a force, European and Native, as the internal security of the possessions subject to your Lordship's government will admit; with a view to such a force being ready

¹ *Marquess Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. II, pp. 402-3.*

² *Despatches, Vol. I, p. 23.*

* Mauritius.

for service at the shortest notice, in whatever direction or quarter the course of events may demand . . .

The movements of this force [says paragraph 20] will be governed by future events. We deem it necessary, however, that it should be held at the disposal of the Honourable Colonel Wellesley, in such cases as will be specified in the secret and separate instructions of the Governor-General to your Lordship and to Colonel Wellesley: *for this reason, it is requisite that no officer should be appointed to the command of it, or to serve with it, who shall be senior in rank, either to Colonel Wellesley or to Colonel Champagné.**¹

Colonel Wellesley had barely returned to Seringapatam from his successful campaign against Dhoondiah, when he received the Governor-General's orders to proceed to Trincomalee. The prospect of more team work with his brother in a command so full of interesting possibilities must have been a delight to his experience-seeking mind. He wasted no time in getting under way, and by the end of December was at Trincomalee throwing heart and soul into the equipment of his troops.

Lord Wellesley, however, was not quite so happy, for he knew there was likely to be trouble over his brother's appointment.

Great jealousy [he wrote him] will arise among the General officers in consequence of my employing you; but I employ you because I rely on your good sense, discretion, activity, and spirit, and I cannot find all those qualities united in any other officer in India who could take such a command.²

That jealousy was not long in showing itself. It broke into active eruption in the person of Major-General Baird, who desired to have the Trincomalee Command. He therefore waited upon the Governor-General and protested vehemently in a somewhat stormy interview, at Lord Wellesley's having placed his brother, who was only a Colonel, in such a

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. I, pp. 30, 31.*

² *Supp. Dispatches, Vol. II, p. 315.*

* The italics are the author's.

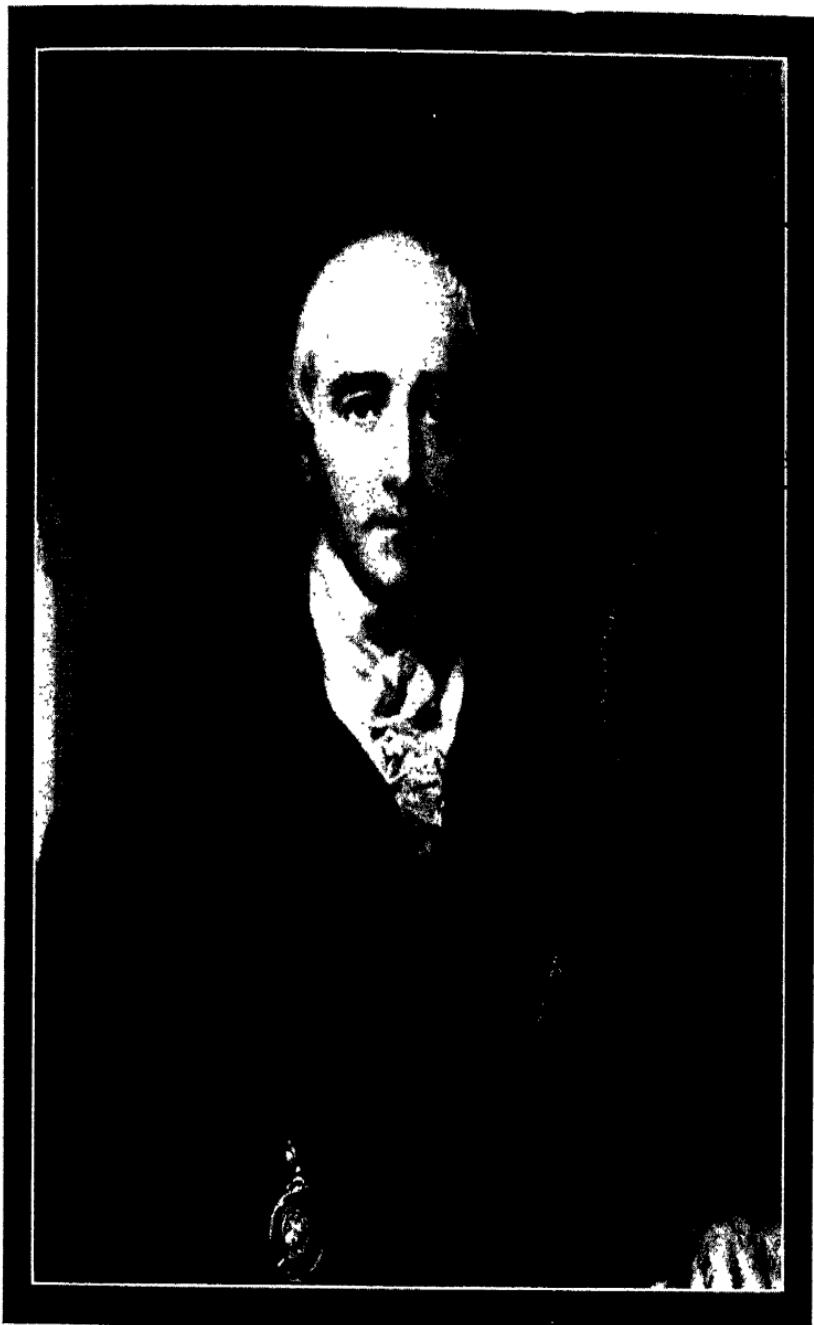
situation. There were, in all, three interviews, and in the end the Governor-General yielded and promised the command to Baird.*

This decision of Lord Wellesley's was not the yielding under pressure of a weakling, but the act of a strong man who dares publicly to change his mind. He made it with his eyes open knowing what it was going to cost him, and that it would probably cause an estrangement between his brother and himself. It was a choice between the one and the many. He must either sacrifice his brother, or lose the confidence of those he governed, which he inevitably would do once the stigma of favouritism and partiality were to become attached to him. There had been enough unpleasantness over Arthur's appointment at Seringapatam, and now fate had led the same General officer across his brother's path again. It was almost inevitable that he should yield to Baird's request, even though it was an act of injustice towards Colonel Wellesley.

Had Richard at this time acted with his usual wisdom, he would have written immediately to his brother explaining what had happened and throwing himself upon his generosity to stand by him and 'see it through'. He would not have appealed in vain; Arthur's sense of public duty would have made him swallow his disappointment, and there the matter might have ended. Instead of which the Governor-General entered into the dangerous game of bluff, which led him into tortuous paths, and was the real cause of his brother's subsequent bitterness of feeling.

It is necessary that I should apprise you [he informed Colonel Wellesley on December 21st] that, if circumstances should ultimately determine me to attempt the expedition to Egypt, that attempt will require so large a force as to occasion the necessity of my employing some one or two of His Majesty's General officers now in India. Under such circumstances, you will judge whether your best post would not be Mysore, after you

* Authority for Baird's interviews with the Governor-General is, *Light and Shade in Bygone India*, by Colonel Thornton.



“LORD WELLESLEY.”

e Governor-General begins to Bluff [1801

fedorde me your assistance in collecting the army, and in our opinion with respect to the general plan of its operations. mes Craig or General Baird, or both, would probably be in the service against Egypt, and I apprehend that in neither is your situation would be very eligible.¹

ve is the decoy letter which has led the historian, plently the public, in the wrong direction ; for it educed that Arthur should not have been annoyed sequent supersession since he had had fair warning hood from the beginning.

rk point of this argument, however, is the fact that g was not given until 46 days after the first instruc- d to Colonel Wellesley, and 60 days after those Admiral Rainier.*

ceived this letter on January 7th, and on January ceded to make mincemeat of its reasoning.

to observe [he replied] that you have altered your mind upon ince the army was first assembled, and your first orders were opears to have been intended that I should command this vents, however reinforced by troops to be supplied by the of Fort St. George and Bombay ; and in consequence I self to great expense, and have brought with me several held situations which were agreeable to them. I should not hem to give up those situations, and I don't believe that ave come with me, if there had been any reason to believe uld eventually have come under the command of Sir James General Baird. I mention these circumstances not as a you should continue me in the command of the troops, to re I am aware there are many objections, but to show that on your letters that I was to be continued in the command r all circumstances ; and I lament that the objections to my ere not at first adverted to, and that I was not informed of y that I should be superseded.²

thus unburdened himself, Arthur continued his is as if nothing had happened, and the communica-

Despatches, Vol. II, p. 324.

² *Ibid., p. 325.*

* See p. 63.

tions between the brothers continued perfectly friendly. The younger does not appear at this juncture to have realized what was actually impending, he probably surmised that pressure had been put upon his brother, but trusted that he would not yield.

About a month later, on February 6th, Colonel Wellesley received copies of orders from England forwarded to him by an express vessel from the Government of Madras.

These orders called for a force to be sent from India with as little delay as possible, to co-operate from the side of the Red Sea, in the operations against the French in Egypt which were being carried out under Sir Ralph Abercromby.*

Knowing that this was one of the objectives for which the force at Trincomalee had been assembled, Colonel Wellesley, without waiting for the Governor-General's instructions, embarked the troops for Bombay, the nearest provisioning centre; in order to save time and carry out the orders of the British Government with as little delay as possible.

On his way thither, he received the first intimation of what was in store for him in a letter from the Governor-General (who at that time had not received the orders from England), stating that he had changed his plans. Admiral Rainier had refused to co-operate against the Isle of France, and the expedition was now destined for Batavia, with General Baird in command and Colonel Wellesley as second-in-command.

Immediately after the reduction of Batavia, [the letter continued] a proper garrison having been appropriated to the defence of that place, it is my intention that the remainder of the troops, together with such additional force as it may be advisable to apply to this service from India, should proceed directly from Java to the attack of the Isle of France.

* Sir Ralph Abercromby, General, 1734-1801. A distinguished soldier. Served at Minden and in the Seven Years War. Served as Major-General in the campaign of Flanders 1793-4. Served in Holland in 1799 at Bergen-op-Zoom. Commanded the Egyptian Expedition in 1800 and was mortally wounded at the Battle of Aboukir in 1801.

*The chief command of the expedition against the Isle of France will be intrusted to you . . .**¹

Twelve days after writing the above the Governor-General changed his plans again, on the strength of two brilliant and masterful despatches he had written to Admiral Rainier, in favour of the Isle of France expedition, which he hoped would make him change his mind. In the event of this occurring Lord Wellesley issued fresh orders, placing General Baird in command of the expedition against the Isle of France.

Here was a complete change of front since January 24th, when this expedition had been specially earmarked for Arthur Wellesley.

The day after the issue of the above instructions, Lord Wellesley received the despatches from England, ordering troops to be sent to Egypt. So once again he had to write fresh orders, and the force proceeding to the Red Sea was officially placed under General Baird.

Colonel Wellesley was now completely and finally superseded. The Governor-General, however, was not at all happy about it, and something of what he was feeling leaks out in his private letter to Baird.

I have chosen my brother to second you in this glorious enterprize [he writes] and I rely on your giving the public the full benefit of his talents, by admitting him to your most cordial confidence, and by uniting harmoniously and zealously with him in the prosecution of my wishes. I have manifested an honourable confidence in you by selecting you for this service. . . . In return I claim from you the full benefit for myself and my country, not only of your services, but of those of my brother, and of all the gallant and able officers whom he has brought with him to the army.²

With Arthur himself, however, Lord Wellesley still carried on the game of bluff.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. II, p. 333.*

² *Marquess Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. II, p. 451.*

* The italics are the author's.

Since the date of my last dispatches to you [he wrote] on the subject of the intended expeditions against Batavia and the Isle of France, I have received dispatches overland from England, which have determined me to relinquish for the present the prosecution of those expeditions.

For the contents of those dispatches, and for the measures which I now propose to pursue, I must refer you to my instructions, of this date, to Major General Baird, which he is directed to communicate to you.

I have appointed Major General Baird to command the armament, which is now destined to the Red Sea, and I have appointed you second in command on that important service.¹

The above must have made somewhat galling reading, but it was capped by Lord Wellesley's private letter of the same date, in which he tells his brother that,

you must know that I could not employ you in the chief command of so large a force as is now to proceed to Egypt without violating every rule of the service . . . and although it was always my intention to employ you to assemble and prepare the army, I was aware that, if it came to act in Egypt, you must take the second command.²

One wonders who felt worse over the above, the writer or the recipient? For a man of Lord Wellesley's intellect to write a letter containing reasoning which no logical mind could accept, and which he knew his brother would not believe, must have been a very unpleasant occupation. The art of bluffing was indeed an exacting one.

Apart from the stupendous statement that Arthur was only intended to assemble and prepare the army, but not to take it to Egypt which was certainly not the Governor-General's original intention (see orders of November 5th, 1800), Lord Wellesley's reasoning falls down when he tries to justify his conduct on the theory that the force proceeding to Egypt was too large a command to be entrusted to a Colonel. If this objection was valid, it must have always existed, and yet in spite of it, the Governor-General had entrusted to Colonel Wellesley a force that was even larger than that placed under

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. I, p. 72.*

² *Supp. Dispatches, Vol. II, p. 356.*

the command of General Baird, as the following table will show :

FORCES PLACED UNDER COLONEL WELLESLEY BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Orders of November 14th, 1800. (Supp. Despatches, Vol. II, p. 284)

80th Regiment.
19th Regiment.
10th Regiment.
Native Volunteer Sepoys 1,000 (from Bengal).
38 European Artillery.
46 Golundauze.
100 lascars for following train of field ordnance :
(Four 12 pounders).
(Six 6 pounders).
(Two howitzers).

Further Orders of December 1st, 1800. (Supp. Despatches, Vol. II, p. 312)

Proceeding from Calcutta including followers :

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| Europeans and Natives | · | · | · | · | · | · | 2,700 |
| Five companies of 19th from Negapatam | · | · | · | · | · | · | 500 |
| Remainder of the 19th Regiment | · | · | · | · | · | · | 300 |
| 80th Regiment | · | · | · | · | · | · | 800 |
| Lascars and followers from Ceylon | · | · | · | · | · | · | 700 |
| | | | | | | | <hr/> |
| Total | · | · | · | · | · | · | <u>5,000</u> |

Orders of December 24th, 1800. (Despatches, Vol. I, p. 48)

The following increase to Colonel Wellesley's force :

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| 88th and part of 86th Regiments | · | · | · | · | · | 500 |
| <i>Estimated strength of Colonel Wellesley's force</i> | · | · | · | · | · | <u>5,500</u> |

Exclusive of 1,600 Native infantry at Bombay destined for this service since October 23rd, 1800, (see *Marquess Wellesley's Despatches*, Vol. II, p. 442), and exclusive of any further augmentation from the Governments of Bombay and Madras.

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| <i>ESTIMATED STRENGTH OF COLONEL WELLESLEY'S FORCE INCLUDING 1,600 NATIVE INFANTRY FROM BOMBAY</i> | · | · | · | · | · | <u>7,100</u> |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|

FORCES PLACED UNDER MAJOR-GENERAL BAIRD BY ORDER OF
THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

February 20th, 1801. (*Marquess Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. II,*
p. 443)

At Ceylon.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| 10th Regiment | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 1,000 |
| 19th Regiment | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 750 |
| 80th Regiment | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 750 |
| 86th and 88th detachments | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 500 |
| European and Native artillery, about two companies with lascars attached | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 386 |
| At Bombay. | | | | | | | | | |
| Native Infantry | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 1,600 |
| Bengal Native Volunteers | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | 1,000 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Estimated Total | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | <u>5,986</u> |

To this must be added a regiment from the Cape (750 strong) which had been ordered to sail with Sir Home Popham, and was intended to co-operate with the forces from India. This would bring Baird's total up to about 6,736, plus one company of European artillery. (See *Marquess Wellesley's Despatches*, Vol. II, p. 443.)

A company of artillery in India in 1801 was composed as follows:*

- 6 sergeants.
- 5 corporals.
- 10 bombardiers.
- 2 buglers.
- 80 gunners.

- 1 subada.
- 3 havildars.
- 2 naicks.
- 84 gun lascars.

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* Authority for composition of a company of artillery at this period, Stubb's *History of the Artillery*.

This addition, bringing Baird's force up to 6,927, still makes it less than that originally entrusted to Colonel Wellesley, which was at least 7,100.

Colonel Wellesley did not receive the Governor-General's letters finally depriving him of his command until after his arrival at Bombay on March 20th; though having received on the voyage Lord Wellesley's despatch of January 24th which destined the expedition to Batavia and placed it under General Baird's command, it is likely that he was not unprepared for something of the kind. It was not, however, until after he had digested the Governor-General's latest correspondence, that the full realization of the manner of his supersession dawned upon him. It hit him badly, and he went down under the pain of it, into a black pit of misery in which no one could comfort him. He felt himself publicly disgraced, branded a failure; these ideas took possession of him, and nothing could shake them out.

The sympathetic Henry received the full brunt of his despair in a series of such unhappy letters that he became quite concerned about him.

I am really very much distressed by your letter of the 21st [he wrote] because you seem to feel your situation so sensibly that nothing I can say will afford you any consolation, and I fear that the present state of your mind may be of material injury to your health . . .

I lament as much as you can possibly do your having been taken away from your command in Mysore, particularly as it has led to your being placed second in command to General Baird. Had I been here in time,* I think I could have prevented his appointment, or at least I could have stated reasons on public grounds why you should not be appointed to act together. It might have been proper to appoint a Major-General to take the command of the expedition to the Red Sea (of this, however, under all the circumstances, I am not quite satisfied); but, admitting this to have been necessary, you certainly ought to have been directed to resume the command in Mysore. Your situation must be irksome to the greatest degree, but I trust it will not be of long duration . . .

I cannot think, my dear Arthur, that you have suffered in the slightest

* Henry Wellesley had just returned from England.

degree in your reputation in consequence of your being superseded in this command. You are still at the top of the tree as to character, and I declare to you (and I can have no wish to flatter you) that I never heard any man so highly spoken of, nor do I know any person so generally looked up to. Your campaign against Dhoondiah is surely sufficient to establish your character as a soldier beyond the reach of malice or detraction of any kind. I hope your fever has quite left you: if it have not, you will not, I conclude, have been imprudent enough to embark.¹

It seems almost extraordinary the degree to which Arthur suffered over this affair. It took a morbid hold on him; the supersession became an obsession. There were various causes that may have contributed to this. That passionate keenness he brought to everything he undertook made it hard to lose the fruits of labours, especially when he was unjustly deprived of them.

Possibly, too, the memories of his childhood made him ultra-sensitive in his dread of appearing a failure. He had worked so strenuously to widen the niche he had made for himself in the world, it was hard to be pushed out of it (as he thought). It was harder still to be pushed out by one he cared for; perhaps that was the bitterest drop in his cup, that it was Richard who had dealt him the blow, and sought to palliate it by excuses that neither could believe.

But whatever his private feelings, he never forgot his public duty, and worked tirelessly to get the expedition ready to sail. He did more than that, for as General Baird had not yet reached Bombay and operations in Egypt had already commenced, he decided to go on ahead and carry on until his Chief arrived.*

My former letters will have shown you how much this will annoy me [he wrote his brother Henry] but I have never had much value for

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. II, p. 364.*

* An important point to notice since it has been suggested that the subsequent illness which prevented Colonel Wellesley sailing with the expedition would not have prevented him had he been in chief command.

the public spirit of any man who does not sacrifice his private views and convenience, when it is necessary. As all my baggage etc. are on board one of the transports not yet come in, I go as bare as is possible.¹

He was spared, however, from putting this heroic decision into practice by a severe attack of fever which laid him low and forced him to postpone his departure. Perhaps, too, it was just as well, for a few days later General Baird arrived.

Nothing redounds more to Arthur's credit than the excellent relations he at once established between the General and himself, co-operating with him in every possible way and placing at his disposal the stores of information he had collected concerning the coming expedition. The two worked so harmoniously together that some of the sting went out of Colonel Wellesley's altered circumstances, and set the seal on his determination to sail with Baird ; a determination all the more to his credit since the Governor-General had given him the option of returning to Mysore.

But Fate willed otherwise, and a bad attack of illness prevented the execution of his laudable decision.

I was, however, seized with a fever, and a breaking out all over my body * [he wrote Colonel Champagné] and here I am under a course of nitrous baths † for a cure. When I shall be well, God knows ! but, in the meantime, I cannot join the armament.²

For this he was genuinely sorry as the following letter to Baird will show.

DEAR GENERAL,

The first circumstance I have to detail to you is the state of my health, which is indeed the cause of this letter. I have had no fever since I saw you ; but I am sorry to say, that the breaking out of which I complained is worse than it

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. I, p. 84.

² *Ibid.*, p. 99.

* The Malabar itch.

† ". . . They were so strong ", said the Duke in after-years, " that the towels which dried me on coming out were quite burnt."—Stanhope, *Conversations with the Duke of Wellington*, p. 103.

was ; and has become so bad as to induce Mr. Scott to order me to begin a course of nitrous baths. This remedy, exclusive of the disease itself, is sufficient to induce me to be desirous to wait, at least rather longer than the *Susannah** will ; if not to give over all thoughts of joining you.

I do this, I assure you, with reluctance, notwithstanding I think it very probable that I shall soon hear of your being recalled † ; however, considering that circumstance, and the bad state of my body, and the remedy which I am obliged to use, I should be mad if I were to think of going at this moment.

As I am writing upon this subject, I will freely acknowledge that my regret at being prevented from accompanying you has been greatly increased by the kind, candid, and handsome manner in which you have behaved towards me ; and I will confess as freely, not only that I did not expect such treatment, but that my wishes before you arrived, regarding going upon the expedition, were directly the reverse of what they are at this moment. I need not enter further upon this subject, than to entreat you will not attribute my stay to any other motive than that to which I have above assigned it : and to inform you, that as I know what has been said and expected by the world in general, I propose, as well for my own credit as for yours, to make known to my friends and to yours, not only the distinguished manner in which you have behaved towards me, but the causes which have prevented my demonstrating my gratitude, by giving you every assistance in the arduous service which you have to conduct.

I shall stay here as long as the season will permit, and then I propose to go round to Madras ; and if I cannot get well, I believe I must try a cold climate . . .

* The ship due to sail with the remainder of the troops.

† It was expected at that time that the affair in Egypt would be practically finished before the troops from India could arrive ; which is exactly what happened, General Baird's force coming in for the tail end of the campaign.

I enclose the memorandum upon your operations, and I refer you to my public letter for other matters. Wishing you every success,

Believe me, etc.

ARTHUR WELLESLEY.¹

Colonel Wellesley was as good as his word regarding his public appreciation of Baird's conduct and his letters contain frequent allusions to it. But in addition to this he himself kept up a friendly correspondence with the General during the time he was absent with the expedition.

Arthur's good feeling towards Baird went a long way towards healing the disappointment of his supersession, and he might have begun to put it all behind him, had not Richard butted in with an official despatch which upset the fraternal apple-cart again. It was doubtless written with the best intentions in the world, but its wording was somewhat wanting in tact, and Arthur required tactful handling at that time, for he was sick in body and only convalescing in mind. It was also pulling rather hard on truth, as the opening sentence shows.

The several arrangements being now completed [states the somewhat imprudent Governor-General] which induced me to avail myself of your knowledge and experience in the equipment of the expedition to be employed on the shores of the Red Sea, it appears to me that your services may, at present, be more usefully employed in resuming the chief command of the troops stationed in Mysore. You have, therefore, my permission to return to that station . . .²

The effect of the first sentence on Arthur was electric, and sent him up on his hind legs like a light-mouthed horse caught suddenly on the curb, and he gave vent to his feelings in the following letter.

MY DEAR MORNINGTON,

The letters which I have written to you lately will have shown you that nothing could be more agreeable to me than the permission which I received yesterday to return to the

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. I, p. 89.

² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

Mysore country. But the first paragraph of the letter contains a reason for my original removal from thence, and my appointment to the chief command of the troops assembled at Ceylon . . . and I wish to trouble you with a few lines upon it.

To avail yourself of my knowledge and experience in the equipment of the expedition to be employed on the shores of the Red Sea, is said to have been your inducement to call me away from Mysore ; but, if this were the case, it was never so stated to me, and if it had been, I should have requested you to employ in the drudgery that person who it was intended should reap all the honour of the service . . . The fact was, that in the month of October you were carried away, by some fortunate circumstances that had occurred, and by your partiality for me, to appoint me to the chief command of the troops to be employed at the Mauritius, in the Red Sea, or, eventually, in India, and the governments were ordered to furnish me with any additional troops that I might require. On the 21st December you first announce your intention to appoint Sir James Craig or General Baird to the command. I don't deny that I conceive that they had reason to complain when I was appointed to this command, and I believe they did complain ; but, in order to do justice to them, why should a greater injury and injustice than they complained of be done to me, and why should reasons for my appointment be publicly given to the whole world, which at least tend to show that you conceived I was fit for the equipment of the expedition, but not to conduct it after it was equipped ?

You have repeatedly stated to me an opinion directly the contrary. But the reason of the change stands now publicly unexplained, excepting in the manner above mentioned . . . and as your success in this country, and your character, must give to your opinion the fullest weight, I stand publicly convicted of incapacity to conduct more of a service than its equipment. I need not represent how injurious that opinion must be to my future prospects ; particularly so as the public

in general, and those who are to judge of my conduct, know well that your partiality to me would have induced you to refrain from delivering it, if the incapacity had not been manifest upon experiment.

If the change in the command were made only because I had not sufficient rank, and because others had the rank required, and complained of the preference shown to me at that time, it would have been fair towards me to state it (although, by the bye, I don't conceive those to be any good reasons for superseding a man when he has been appointed to a command). The next best thing would have been to give no reason at all for my appointment or my supersession. In either of these cases I should have lamented only that the impropriety of the appointment had not been found out before it was made, the expense which I had unnecessarily incurred, and that I had been induced to remove officers from a situation which they did like to one they do not . . .

I don't want to trouble you with my private feelings or concerns, when I know you have enough to think of; and, whatever I might have felt, I should never have said or written another word upon the subject if I had not received yesterday your letter of the 28th March.

The supersession has astonished, and is the conversation of, the whole army and of all India, and numbers of my friends have urged and written to me to request that I would have it explained . . .

Believe me, etc.,
ARTHUR WELLESLEY.¹

But all unknown to himself, the younger brother was struggling against Destiny, and the elder was the instrument used to guide him in the right direction. For the Command of the Red Sea led nowhere, whilst Arthur's opportunity lay waiting for him in that future towards which his face was somewhat reluctantly turned.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. II, pp. 362, 363, 364.*

Chapter Five

THE WAR IN THE DECCAN

ASSYE

ARGAUM

Never lose an occasion ; opportunity is more powerful even than conquerors and prophets. DISRAELI.

As soon as Arthur was able to leave off his nitrous baths he made tracks for Mysore, making the first part of the journey by sea.

He was longing to get back, seeking like a wounded tiger the refuge of his own jungle in which to lick his hurts. They required, too, a stupendous amount of licking, for they were deep and suppurating, and it was many weeks before they were properly healed.

The Red Sea affair continued to haunt him like an evil dream. His letters were full of allusions to it. "I do everything I can to lose all thoughts of what has happened," he writes to his brother Henry, "but everybody that I see and speak to is of the same opinion that I have always held upon it."¹

"For God's sake, try to forget what has happened,"² wrote Henry in reply. But Arthur couldn't, at least not at that juncture, and he is still harping upon it in his next letter.

Is not an officer lowered, does he not receive a mark of the disapprobation of the government which he serves, when he is superseded in the command which was given to him absolutely and without reserve,

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. II, pp. 409, 410.*

² *Ibid., p. 409.*

and is told that it was never intended to employ him in more than the preparations? ¹

He landed at Cannanore on April 27th, after a tedious sea passage from Bombay, during part of which he was very sick.

He was still in a poor state of health, having no appetite, being unable to sleep and liable to touches of fever and ague. He was, however, all agog to get back to Seringapatam, and nothing was allowed to interfere with his progress thither.

Part of the road lay through the hostile country of the Cotiote, at which stage of the journey he was alone with George Elers, of the 12th, having dashed ahead of his staff, and the six troopers who served as bodyguard. "Now, Elers," observed the Colonel, "if we are taken prisoners, I shall be hanged as being brother to the Governor-General, and you will be hanged for being found in bad company." ²

No one, however, appeared to carry out this gruesome suggestion, and they passed safely into the friendly country of Koorg, where even an invitation to hunt with the Rajah could not tempt Arthur to delay his homeward journey.

So long and rapid were the last three marches that George Elers declared on arrival, "I was much pleased to lie down and recover from the fatigue I had gone through, for I was nearly knocked up from following the great man in his rapid movements." ³

Elers, who was invited to stay with Colonel Wellesley at the old Palace of Dowlaut Baug, has left in his memoirs an intimate little picture of the Colonel at this particular period.

Colonel Wellesley [he says] kept a plain but good table. He had a very good appetite, and his favourite dish was a roast saddle of mutton and salad. This dish was placed opposite to him, and he generally made his dinner off it. He was very abstemious with wine; drank four or five glasses with people at dinner, and about a pint of claret after. He was very even in his temper, laughing and joking with those he liked . . .

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol II, p. 425.*

² *Elers Memoirs, p. 117.* ³ *Ibid., p. 120.*

His dress at this time consisted of a *long coat*, the uniform of the 33rd Regiment, a *cocked hat*, white pantaloons, Hessian boots and spurs, and a large sabre, the handle solid silver. . . . He never wore powder, though it was at that time the regulation to do so. His hair was cropped close. I have heard him say he was convinced the wearing of hair powder was very prejudicial to health as impeding the perspiration.¹

He was remarkably clean in his person [continues Elers] and I have known him shave twice in one day, which I believe was his constant practice.²

For in matters of cleanliness Arthur was fastidiously modern, and a belief in the cleansing properties of water one of the characteristics of his physical outlook.

Doubtless this was an inheritance from his spartan mother, who winter and summer had insisted upon the cold bath as her family's morning ritual ; and woe betide the one who tried to shirk it.

A member of the Wellesley family * used to tell an amusing little story concerning the subterfuge resorted to by Lady Mornington's family to avoid their cold baths on winter mornings. Instead of getting into the bath themselves, the soap was allowed to deputize, in the hopes that the soapy appearance of the water would deceive the eyes of the relentless parent.

For a while the ruse succeeded, but one day Lady Mornington discovered the trick, and in order not to be further out-maneuvred, she decided to do 'sentry go' at the morning ablutions. From henceforth there was no more escape for the members of her shivering and protesting family, who were forced to run the gauntlet of an ice-cold tub under a pair of unrelenting and ever-watchful eyes.

It was May 7th when Arthur arrived at Seringapatam, and though he promptly got another attack of fever, this did not prevent him plunging straightway into Mysore affairs. These affairs in general were going very well.

¹ *Elers Memoirs*, p. 120, 121, 124.

² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

* The author's grandfather, who was brought up by Lady Mornington.

The Rajah's government is in the most prosperous state [he wrote his brother Henry], the country is become a garden where it is inhabited, and the inhabitants are returning fast to those parts which the last savage had forced them to quit . . . the whole country is settled and in perfect tranquillity.¹

As usual, the Zenana claimed his attention and one fancies that the inmates must have been waiting his advent with great impatience, for the ladies at once demanded clothes and were by Colonel Wellesley's orders immediately supplied.

One wonders if under Tippoo their requests had received such prompt attention. He may not have been so soft-hearted towards the fair sex as was the young Governor of Mysore.

The whole of the late Tippoo Sultaun's family had not yet departed to Vellore and arrangements for further removals were still in progress; arrangements in which Colonel Wellesley showed himself all kindness and consideration.

I have been to the palace to visit the ladies [he wrote Captain Wilks, the Military Secretary to the Madras Government] and I find that they look forward to a residence with their sons separate from the other women as a source of so much happiness to them, that it would be worse than improper to separate them from their sons even for a short time.²

His care to protect the privacy of the women during their journey was most solicitous;

. . . I particularly request that the greatest attention may be paid to their prejudices and customs [he wrote the officer in charge of their escort], that you will keep everybody at a distance from them, and prevent all intrusion upon them, which can be occasioned only by a desire to gratify a vain curiosity.³

With the young princes Arthur Wellesley's relation appears to have been that of a kindly elder brother, and he entered with sympathetic understanding into their requirements.

They have been very desirous that I should write to you about their future accommodation [he wrote the officer in charge of the deposed

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. II, pp. 410, 411.*

² *Ibid., p. 385.*

³ *Ibid., p. 456.*

Sultaun's family]. They are now grown to be nearly men, and like other Mussulmans, they are anxious to have separate houses, and their women in private. . . .

They have lived hitherto in the Zenana, and they have had but a small allowance. . . . Hereafter, as they will be established in separate houses, it would appear proper to give them separate allowances to pay all their expenses. . . .

I have thus made known to you the wishes of these boys. If you think that my writing to government would be likely to forward them, let me know it, and I will do so.

I acknowledge that I am very anxious that they should be gratified.¹

Caste prejudices met with a like consideration from the young Governor, they were always respected by him, and he demanded the same from his subordinates. A British officer who forced a certain caste of people to look after horses against their will, was promptly told to move his camp.

. . . The people near Buswaputtm [observed Colonel Wellesley] are of a caste who have a particular objection to being employed in the care of horses, and as they do not understand it, I request that . . . you will move towards Chittledroog, at which place I understand that you will be able to procure some persons to attend on the horses without inconvenience to the country.²

Oppression of the natives, all too prevalent in those days of the East India Company's rule, met with his severest disapproval, and we find him at this period protesting against the decisions of two courts-martial which had sat to try British officers for this offence. Of the first which concerned an officer convicted of tying up and beating a native in order to force provisions from him without payment, Colonel Wellesley observes as follows :

I never can agree in opinion with the court-martial that this scandalous conduct is not unbecoming the character of a British officer and a gentleman, and I never can approve a sentence which describes it in other terms than those of the strongest reprobation. . . . What will be the opinion of British justice, and honour, and protection, if a gentleman

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. II, pp. 457, 458.*

² *Ibid., p. 399.*

who has been guilty . . . of such acts of oppression as Mr. —— has himself acknowledged, is suffered to go unpunished? ¹

The second case was more serious still; the defendant, amongst other charges, being accused of compelling natives to stand in the sun with stores on their heads, in order to extort money from them; and of causing another to be flogged to death and forcing others to sign a paper testifying that the man died as the result of poison.

In the course of this trial [states Colonel Wellesley] the evidence has been proved of a system of oppression and exaction at Seedashéeghur during the command of Lieutenant ——, such as it is to be hoped does not disgrace the army in any other place; and yet the general court martial have marked their sense of the crimes of which they have found Lieutenant —— guilty, and of his general conduct . . . in no other manner than by a suspension from rank and pay for six months, and by a reprimand.

I entreat them . . . to reconsider this sentence, and to reflect on the disgrace which will be attached to the character of the whole profession if it be supposed that a person found guilty of such crimes can be suffered to remain among them.²

Colonel Wellesley, rather to his own surprise, prevailed upon the court-martial to alter their sentence and the officer was tried in the civil courts for murder. This was an almost unheard-of thing in those days, when a decision was rarely given against a British officer; the idea of equality of justice, so rigorously enforced by Colonel Wellesley, was quite a new innovation.

Nevertheless it had come to stay, for under the Wellesley Government the old system of exploitation and oppression was to be fought to the death with untiring vigilance and determination.

There was another court-martial nearer home, which, while it lasted, occupied Colonel Wellesley for several weeks in a most unpleasant manner. This was the trial of three British officers for embezzling stores at Seringapatam.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. II, pp. 440, 441.* ² *Ibid., Vol. III, p. 19.*
M.W.

The result of their trials is that they are all broke [wrote the Colonel to General Baird] and . . . there appeared before the general court-martial a scene of dirt and villainy such as never before disgraced the character of an officer, or shocked the feelings of those who were obliged to investigate it. I have never performed so unpleasant a duty, or one which gave me so much concern and trouble ; and I neither wish to do such a one again myself, nor to see it devolve upon any friend of mine.¹

His disgust, however, did not prevent him from making a kind-hearted appeal to the Governor of Madras for one of the officers broke at this trial :

I take the liberty [he wrote] of addressing your Lordship in favour of an old man, (the late) Lieutenant Colonel —, whom I have lately been the means of convicting of very serious crimes before a general court-martial ; and I do so, not from any doubt that I entertain of the reality of his guilt, but from a conviction of his former good conduct as an officer, and of the extreme poverty and distress to which he has been reduced in consequence of the sentence of the general court-martial. I understand that when he will have paid the Company the sums which are due to them in consequence of that sentence, he will be left entirely destitute ; and, without attempting to justify any part of his conduct, I may safely say that he becomes an object of charity.

Allow me, therefore, to entreat your Lordship to give him some small pension to enable him to support himself, or that you will recommend him for some provision to the Court of Directors on account of his long services and his present reduced situation.²

Arthur's time does not appear to have been spent wholly in unpleasant duties, for his leisure moments were occupied in a flirtation with the wife of an artillery captain, a little affair which scandalized—not the *lady's husband*—but Colonel Wellesley's A.D.C., “ who considered it highly immoral and indecorous ”. His interference caused a coolness between himself and his senior officer,

and [says Elers] they did not speak all the remaining time I lived with the Colonel. For my own part [he continues] . . . if I witness anything going on between two people and the *husband* does not see or choose to take notice of it, I think none but a father or a brother has a right to interfere. You are sure to get into a scrape and make enemies

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. II, p. 625.*

² *Ibid., p. 592.*

of all parties. And as for Colonel Wellesley, he never in these matters interfered with others, but, on the contrary, once kindly assisted me in a little affair of gallantry I had, but not with a married woman. But this was in a spirit of gratitude, I having assisted him on a like occasion.¹

The Dowlaut Baug at the time of Colonel Wellesley's return was enlivened by the presence of Mrs. Stevenson, the pretty young wife of Colonel Stevenson who commanded in Mysore during the Governor's absence. The breath of scandal, however, did not blow in her direction, Arthur's attentions in this quarter being confined to gifts of rose-trees, cabbage and celery plants, and standing godfather to her son.

Little Salabut Khan, the son of Dhoondiah Waugh, adopted by Colonel Wellesley, seems also to have been an inmate of the family circle, and was obviously on the best of terms with his benefactor. "Salabut Khan makes salam," says the Colonel in a letter to a friend ; "he goes on as usual, but, poor fellow, he has been very sick."²

Colonel Wellesley now remained close upon two years in his little kingdom without any lengthy absences ; the spring of 1802 being marked by his promotion to Major-General.

In 1803 he went on active service again, setting out on March 8th with a contingent from Seringapatam to take part in an expedition to reinstate the Peshwah of Poonah upon his throne.*

This was the preliminary canter to the war in the Deccan, which commenced with the deposed Peshwah's appeal to the British for aid.

Little did Arthur realize as he started out upon that march that he was entering upon another stage of his life's journey, that his rendezvous, ostensibly with the Peshwah, was in reality with the Goddess of Fortune who waited to crown him at Assye. For his feet were set in the right path this time ; there was no need to turn them back. Opportunity

¹ *Elers Memoirs*, p. 126. ² *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. II, p. 421.

* The Peshwah, Bajee Rao, had been deposed by Jeswunt Rao Holkar, who had beaten the combined forces of Dowlut Rao Scindiah and the Peshwah, and had placed Amrut Rao upon the throne of Poonah.

who showed hostile intentions towards the British ally, the Nizam of Hyderabad, by squatting with large armies upon his frontier and refusing to move.

On June 4th General Wellesley, who had been vainly endeavouring to persuade them to quit their menacing position or explain their intentions, marched from Poonah with his army, hoping that the approach of a British force might ensure their peaceful withdrawal.

His hopes were not destined to fulfilment, and upon his shoulders was soon to rest the decision for peace or war, for on June 26th the Governor-General conferred upon his brother extensive military and political powers which threw the fate of the Deccan* into his hands.

Your approved ability, zeal, temper, and judgement [stated Lord Wellesley in his official despatch] combined with your extensive local experience; your established influence and high reputation among the Mahratta chiefs and states, and your intimate knowledge of my views and sentiments concerning the British interests in the Mahratta empire, have determined me to vest these important and arduous powers in your hands.¹

One can fancy the pleasure it must have given Richard to issue these orders. Apart from the fact of the professional satisfaction of employing the right man for the right job, it gave him the opportunity of making good past hurts, and of demonstrating publicly the great esteem in which he held his brother's talents. It was a bridge thrown down across the waters of estrangement, a bridge upon whose planks brotherly pride and affection were to meet and mingle, a bridge, too, leading to the vast unexplored country of the future, across which the feet of the younger were to pass to imperishable glory. Not that these same feet would not inevitably have passed that way—but it was given to the hands of love to speed their passing.

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. I, p. 198.*

* The country between the Kistna and Nerbudda rivers.

marched beside him, public approval hovered about him, all that he felt he had lost with the Red Sea Command was to be given back to him in full measure and overflowing.

He started forth in the highest spirits. “ . . . I am advancing towards Poonah with a detachment of the army ”, he wrote Colonel Collins, “ which is so well equipped and composed, that I should not be apprehensive of the consequences if it were opposed by all the forces of Hindustan.”¹

He was now in the Mahratta country—that vast territory stretching north and south from Delhi to the Toombuddra river, and east and west from the Bay of Bengal to the Gulf of Cambay—but a General Order issued before leaving the confines of Mysore, ensured the good behaviour of his troops.

The troops [ran the order] will enter the Mahratta territory to-morrow morning, but they are not to consider it as an enemy’s country. The strictest order and discipline must be observed, and everything that is required from the country must be paid for. Major-General Wellesley will certainly punish any person who may be found guilty of a breach of this order.²

Thus it came about that he passed peacefully through a wild and warlike country, whose stable industry was fighting between its various chiefs.

I have prevailed on all these chiefs to cease their contests for the present [he reported to General Stuart] and to join this detachment with the troops, which would otherwise be employed in the plunder of the country. . . . They have also allowed me the use of the supplies of the countries under their management or protection, on payment ; and have protected the people belonging to my camp in their passage through their countries.³

But [says Major Malcolm *] the confidence and respect of every class

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IV, p. 59.* ² *Ibid., p. 41.*

³ *Despatches, Vol. I, p. 124.*

* Sir John Malcolm, Colonel, 1769–1833. A famous character in India at this period. He commenced life at the age of 13 in the East India Company’s army, where he served for nine years. He afterwards held many important appointments, which gave him a great insight into Indian affairs. In 1801 he became for a time private secretary to Lord Wellesley, Governor-General of India. A charming personality and a great friend of Arthur Wellesley.

in the provinces to the south of the Kistna is in a very great degree personal to the Hon. Major-General Wellesley: to the admiration which the Mahratta chiefs entertain of that officer's military character, and the firm reliance which the inhabitants place on his justice and protection . . .¹

It was not only the Mahratta chieftains who felt the force of Arthur Wellesley's personality, for a young officer who had recently joined his contingent was greatly impressed by his General.

The appearance and demeanour of General Wellesley [he records] were such as at first sight to inspire confidence, which feeling was not diminished on a closer acquaintance. All those who served under him looked up to him with that degree of respect, I might almost say awe, which by combining an implicit obedience to his commands with an unbounded confidence in the wisdom of his measures, was calculated to draw forth all the energies of man in the execution of his orders.²

On April 20th General Wellesley arrived at Poonah, having dashed ahead of the army with his cavalry to save the city from being burnt by the usurper, Amrut Rao.

Here, after replacing the Peshwah upon his throne, he remained for six weeks, watching the progress of events, and making extensive military preparations. For Mahratta land north of Poonah was now like a soup that has come to the boil, it bubbled and hissed in several different quarters so that it was difficult to say at which point it would boil over.

The ingredients causing most anxiety at that time were the Mahratta chiefs, Scindiah of Gwalior,* and the Rajah of Berar,†

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. I, p. 127.

² *Twelve Years' Military Adventure*, Vol. I, p. 83.

* The Maharajah Dowlut Rao Scindiah, whose territories formed the northern and western portions of the Mahratta states, stretching from the Ganges and Jumna rivers to south of the river Nerbudda, was at that time the most powerful of the Mahratta chiefs. His policy was anti-British, and he aimed to become the paramount power in India.

† Rogojee Bhoonslah, Rajah of Berar (whose territories were the Dominions of Nagpoor), was at first inclined to be pro-British, but afterwards joined with Scindiah against the East India Company.

who showed hostile intentions towards the British ally, the Nizam of Hyderabad, by squatting with large armies upon his frontier and refusing to move.

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¹ *Dispatches, Vol. I, p. 298.*

* The country between the Kistna and Nerbudda rivers.

Little knowing that he was heading for a war which was to place him upon the first rung of the ladder of military fame, Arthur Wellesley, as ever, used his influence in the cause of peace, and passed many weeks of patient negotiation in an endeavour to persuade the Mahratta chiefs to give up their war-like intentions and retire from the Nizam's frontier.

But it was of no avail ; they would neither withdraw nor explain their intentions, and on August 6th Major-General Wellesley was obliged to declare war.

"I offered you peace on terms of equality, and honourable to all parties," he told them ; "you have chosen war, and are responsible for all consequences."¹

War having been declared, General Stuart, the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras army, with great magnanimity left the scene of action and went to Madras, in order to leave his junior a clear field.

The experience gained by Major-General Wellesley during his former operations in the Mahratta territories [he wrote the Governor-General], the extensive knowledge and influence which he has acquired in the present campaign, and his eminent military talents enable him better than any other officer to prosecute with success the service which he has hitherto conducted with so much ability ; and I have chosen to relinquish the gratification which I should derive from the command of an army, probably destined to undertake very distinguished services, in order to continue that important charge in the hands of the officer best qualified in my judgement to exercise it with advantage to the public.²

Thus the noble-minded Stuart ; small wonder that he held so warm a place in Arthur Wellesley's heart ; ". . . I owe everything", he stated before he left India, "to his confidence, his favourable opinion, and his support. I feel for him an affection and gratitude which I cannot describe. . . ."³

General Wellesley commenced operations with the siege of Ahmednuggur, which fell into his hands on August 12th.

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. I, pp. 287, 288.

² *Ibid.*, p. 296.

³ *Supp. Dispatches*, Vol. IV, p. 472.

It was during this siege that he first met Colin Campbell * of the 78th, who was destined to become a lifelong friend. In after-years the Duke of Wellington used to tell the story of the meeting, in the following manner :

As I was watching the progress of things [said he] I saw an officer seize a ladder, plant it against the wall, and rush up alone. He was thrown down on reaching the summit, but jumped up at once, and reascended ; he was again thrown down and again reascended, followed on this occasion by the men. There was a scuffle on the top of the wall, in which the officer had to cut his way through the defenders, and presently a whole crowd of British troops poured after him into the town. As soon as I got in, I made inquiries about him, and found that his name was Colin Campbell, and that he was wounded. I sought him out, and said a few words to him, with which he seemed greatly delighted. I like his blunt, manly manner, and never lost sight of him afterwards. He became one of my aides-de-camp. . . .¹

Colin Campbell is one of the many instances which give the lie to the accusation made against the Duke that he neglected his comrades in arms when his fighting days were ended. The two remained always in the close touch of friendship. Towards the end of Campbell's life, when as Governor of Ceylon distance separated him from his former friend, the Duke of Wellington wrote to him from England reminding him of former days. "We are both growing old," he said ; "God knows if ever we shall meet again. Happen what may, I shall never forget our first meeting under the walls of Ahmednuggur."²

On August 24th Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar entered the Nizam's territory with a view to marching upon Hyderabad. From thence onwards until September 23rd, the opposing armies resembled a game of draughts in which General Wellesley was the most confident player, the Mahratta chief-

¹ Gleig, pp. 35, 36.

² *Dictionary of National Biography*.

* Major-General Sir Colin Campbell, 1776-1847. He occupied positions of trust under Wellington both during the Peninsular War, at Waterloo, and during the years of occupation of France, having an intimate knowledge of his Chief's private affairs.

tains dodging about from square to square in order to keep a respectable distance between the great British warrior and themselves.

To force them to action, however, was General Wellesley's object, and at Assye, on September 23rd, Fate sent him the opportunity.

It was an opportunity pregnant with meaning, for in his capacity to see it as such lay the foundation of his military fame. By some it would be considered the reverse of opportunity, for that which was being pushed tentatively towards him was the chance of fighting a battle in which his forces would be outnumbered by 6 to 1, in which an army of 8,000 tired men, who had already marched 24 miles that morning, was to be pitted against the united forces of Scindiah and the Rajah of Berar, 50,000 strong, who had not moved from their encampment.

The encounter, owing to faulty information, was entirely unexpected, for General Wellesley had not reckoned to come into the presence of the Mahratta armies until the following day, when he was to be joined by the forces of the Nizam under Colonel Stevenson.

It was the psychological moment of Arthur's life ; he was being balanced on the scales—would he be weighed and found wanting ? The laurels trembled in the hands of Fate.

But there was no need for apprehension, for with his capacity for swift decision he saw the road to take and went forward fearlessly in that knowledge.

I determined upon the immediate attack [he stated afterwards] because I saw clearly that, if I attempted to return to my camp at Naulniah, I should have been followed thither by the whole of the enemy's cavalry, and I might have suffered some loss ; instead of attacking, I might have been attacked there in the morning ; and, at all events, I should have found it very difficult to secure my baggage, as I did, in any place so near the enemy's camp . . . I therefore determined upon the attack immediately. It was certainly a most desperate one . . .¹

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IV, p. 222.*

After he had come to this determination [says an eye-witness] nothing could be more masterly than his dispositions for the battle, nor could anything surpass the promptitude and decision with which he carried them into effect.¹

General Wellesley's gallant little army nobly backed his decision, and at the end of the day after a battle which must rank for ever amongst the epics of Indian warfare, the enemy were in full retreat.

The cost of the victory, however, was terrible. Upon a field, "flowing with blood, black with abandoned cannon, and covered with slain . . ."² one-third of Wellesley's gallant little army lay dead, dying, or wounded. The remainder, too exhausted to make camp, threw themselves down where they were, to pass the night, their General amongst them.

There was little exultation in Arthur Wellesley's heart as he lay upon the stricken field, but only a sense of loss. Strange visions too, assailed him, and he dreamed that all his friends were dead, and on waking could not be persuaded to the contrary until he had actually seen them.*

That he himself was not amongst the slain can only be attributed to that "Finger of Providence" which was ever upon him in the day of battle.

The General was in the thick of the action the whole time [wrote his Brigade-Major, Colin Campbell] and had a horse killed under him. No man could have shown a better example to the troops than he did. I never saw a man so cool and collected as he was the whole time, though I can assure you, till our troops got orders to advance, the fate of the day seemed doubtful . . .³

Nevertheless, there were at least three occasions when the army nearly lost its Chief. Crossing the river Kaitna at the

¹ *Twelve Years' Military Adventure*, Vol. I, p. 156.

² *Sherer, Military Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 61.

³ *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. IV, p. 186.

* See Mitford Recollections of the Duke of Wellington, British Museum Add. MS. 32572, folio 204. The Duke himself told this story.

commencement of hostilities, General Wellesley's orderly, riding beside him, had the top of his head taken off by a cannon ball. At another stage of the battle his favourite Arab, Diomed, fell piked beneath him, and the horse he was riding at the last attack on the village of Assye had his leg carried away.

General Wellesley's first consideration after the battle was the care of his wounded. He put it even before the pursuit of the enemy, which could have been carried out immediately by Colonel Stevenson's intact division;

but [he explained to the Adjutant-General] as I was obliged to call his division to my neighbourhood, in order that I might have the assistance of the medical men belonging to the division under his command to dress my wounded soldiers, and of the carriage of his sick to remove them to the hospital . . . some days elapsed before Colonel Stevenson descended the Ghaut.¹

In spite of the fact that the battle was fought in defence of the Nizam's territories, General Wellesley experienced the greatest difficulty in getting his wounded into places of safety, for the Nizam's subjects would do nothing for them.

The Nizam's aumils behave very ill [he wrote Colonel Close] and his killedar of Dowlutabad refuses to receive our wounded; so that I have been obliged either to leave my brave fellows exposed in an open town, or to send them to Ahmednuggur, and to wait till I can get my doolies, etc., back again. Thus are all our best plans thwarted, and yet these are the best of our Allies !!!²

Nothing would induce him to move until his mind was at rest about his wounded, and his advance was delayed accordingly. They were finally placed in Adjuntee, General Wellesley escorting one of the sick divisions there in person.

I have just returned from seeing my wounded men [he writes on October 8th]; they are tolerably comfortable, and I hope safe in the fort; but I wish they were at a greater distance from the frontier, instead of

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IV, p. 199.*

² *Dispatches, Vol. I, p. 420.*

being upon the boundary, and on the high road by which everybody enters the Nizam's territories from Hindustan. However, I have done the best I can for them, and have secured them as far as is in my power.¹

His attention and solicitude did not cease with depositing them in hospital, for he continued to visit them whenever he was in the neighbourhood. "I saw your brother yesterday," he writes Major Shawe* on October 26th, "and he is doing well: indeed, all the wounded officers and men are fast recovering."²

Visiting the sick officers and the wounded, we heard of General Wellesley's liberality to them [records Sir Jasper Nicolls † in his journal]; he sent in to every one a dozen of Madeira from his stock, and that wine is neither cheap nor plentiful; today he was in amongst them before the camp was pitched, making enquiries which are as honourable to his feelings as they are agreeable and gratifying to the poor invalids. The men have every comfort which can be afforded from the camp, or procured here . . .³

The official despatches of the battle were delayed en route, and did not reach the Governor-General until October 30th.

After meeting every accident which could retard its progress [wrote the private secretary to General Wellesley] your despatch of the 24th September with the official account of your splendid victory at Assaye [sic] was yesterday received by Lord Wellesley, and fully repaid him for the impatience and anxiety with which it had been expected. . . . For my own part I find it impossible to express my sense of your kindness which in an hour like that in which you wrote, could find time to mention my brother's wound. He is most fortunate in having been present on such a day. I envy every private in your army who lived to tell the tale.⁴

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. I, p. 431. ² *Ibid.*, p. 474.

³ Quoted in *Dispatches*, Vol. I, p. 474 footnote.

⁴ *British Museum Add. MS. 13778*, folio 57.

* Major Merrick Shawe, then private secretary to the Governor-General.

† Sir Jasper Nicolls, Lieutenant-General, 1778-1849. Served under Arthur Wellesley during the Mahratta War and was present at Argaum and Gawilghur.

As for Richard himself, his elation knew no bounds.

You will conceive the pride and delight with which I received the details of your most splendid victory of the 23rd September [he wrote]; you will also feel my disappointment at not having received them from yourself. . . . But from various quarters the particulars of your glory have reached me. . . . With much solicitude for the success of your operations on public grounds, and with every additional anxiety, which affection could inspire, I have fixed my attention on your progress, from the hour of your departure from General Stuart's camp, to the moment of your action of the 23rd of September; and I declare to you most sincerely, that you have infinitely surpassed all that I could have required from you in my public capacity; and have soared beyond the highest point to which all my affection and all the pride of my blood could have aspired, in the most ardent expectations which could be suggested by my sentiments of respect and love for a brother, who has always held the highest place in my heart and in my judgement.¹

Arthur's reply to this effusion was both characteristic and laconic. "I am much gratified," he wrote, "by the approbation which you have expressed in your letter of the 27th October, which I have just received, upon the subject of our action of the 23rd September."²

Nevertheless the elder had become "My dear Mornington" again, and Arthur was "ever yours most affectionately".

The waters of the Red Sea no longer divided.

Richard continued to follow his brother's movements with the most fraternal solicitude, and rumours that he was in bad health, owing to a bout of fever, brought anxious enquiries. "Lord Wellesley has suffered some uneasiness", wrote Major Shawe, "from reports of your having been indisposed, a letter . . . received from Colonel Adams mentions your having recovered from your indisposition which we hope to learn is true. . . ."³

By now Scindiah was beginning to think of peace. Accordingly, on November 7th he sent his envoy to General Wellesley's camp, and on November 23rd an armistice was signed,

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IV*, p. 187.

² *Ibid.*, p. 289.

³ *British Museum Add. MS. 13778, folio 37.*

the English General agreeing to suspend hostilities, provided that Scindiah retired with his army to a stipulated distance.

Scindiah, however, refused to ratify the armistice and on November 28th his army was once more encamped close to the Rajah of Berar.

On the 29th, therefore, General Wellesley marched towards the Mahratta armies and came upon them in the plains of Argaum.

It was late in the day, the enemy had more than twice the number of General Wellesley's troops, and his army was tired out by a 26-mile march in excessive heat, yet he fought and won the Battle of Argaum with very little loss.

At the commencement of hostilities, however, a contretemps occurred which might well have ended disastrously, for two sepoy battalions lost their nerve and bolted, throwing the attacking column into confusion.

The General [says an eyewitness], who was then close to the spot under a tree giving orders to the brigadiers, perceiving what had happened, immediately stepped out in front, hoping by his presence to restore the confidence of the troops ; but, seeing that this did not produce the desired effect, he mounted his horse, and rode up to the retreating battalions ; when, instead of losing his temper, upbraiding them, and endeavouring to force them back to the spot from which they had fled, as most people would have done, he quietly ordered the officers to lead their men under cover of the village, and then to rally and get them into order as quickly as possible. This being done, he put the column again in motion, and leading these very same runaways round the other side of the village, formed them on the very spot he originally intended them to occupy. . . .

This was at once a master-piece of general-ship, and a signal display of that intuitive knowledge of human nature, only to be found in great minds. There is not one man in a million, who, on seeing the troops turn their backs, would not have endeavoured to bring them again to the spot from which they had retreated ; in this attempt it is more than probable that he would have failed ; and in that case, the panic would, most likely, have extended down the column, producing the most disastrous consequences. As it was, the retrograde movement was mistaken by all, but the troops who actually gave way, for a countermarch. Indeed, it is very probable that, owing to the conduct of the General on this occasion, even the runaways might have flattered themselves into

this belief, and thus have been saved from that sense of degradation which might have had a serious effect on their subsequent conduct during the day. . . . This circumstance [continues the narrator] produced in my mind the first clear idea of that genius, which has since been so mainly instrumental, by its conduct and example, in achieving the deliverance of Europe. From the first moment I saw General Wellesley I formed a high opinion of him ; but from this time forth, I looked up to him with a degree of respect bordering on veneration.¹

Two days after the battle, General Wellesley moved on to the siege of Gawilghur, a mountain fortress, and the chief stronghold of the Rajah of Berar, which fell to the British General on December 15th.

The fall of Gawilghur brought the Rajah of Berar to his knees, and on December 17th he signed a treaty with the Company. On December 30th Scindiah followed suit.

¹ *Twelve Years' Military Adventure, Vol. I, pp. 198, 199, 200.*

Chapter Six

LAST DAYS IN INDIA

I would sacrifice Gwalior, or every frontier of India, ten times over, in order to preserve our credit for scrupulous good faith . . .

ARTHUR WELLESLEY.

IN no way is Arthur Wellesley's fair-minded policy towards the inhabitants of India better shown than in his attitude towards the Peace Treaties after the Mahratta War. He drew them up with a view to a lasting peace, and on the only lines which he conceived this would be possible.

The peace he desired to make was one which would satisfy the conquered as well as the conquerors, for only by giving satisfaction to the former could its duration be ensured.

His aim was to show that *right* and not *might* was right, and he struggled hard to uphold that ideal. Ambition, however, is likely to turn and twist the issues of right, and to strain the meaning of the term, and so it was in this instance. The Governor-General, in his zeal for English interests, was inclined to extract the pound of flesh from the treaties. Arthur Wellesley, on the other hand, looked only upon the morality of the question. Both were right according to their lights; and both were endeavouring to serve their country to the best of their ability. The difference was that one desired for it material possessions, the other a high moral reputation.

Richard viewed the matter from the technical viewpoint of the Laws of Nations; Arthur viewed it in the light of the understanding of the Indian chiefs.

It was useless to keep faith according to the Laws of Nations with people who had never heard of them.

... If [he writes his brother] the arrangement is to be one consistent with justice, not generosity, and with good faith as defined by the laws of civilized nations, and not as it is understood by these barbarians, these favourable feelings and dispositions of Scindiah's mind must be effaced by one which operates most strongly upon every native, viz. wounded pride...¹

The chief bone of contention arising from the Peace Treaties was the possession of the Fort of Gwalior, which had been captured from Scindiah by the British.

Scindiah's Government [observes General Wellesley to his brother Henry] although it has concluded the defensive alliance, is not satisfied with us; and the misfortune is that, between ourselves, I think we are in the wrong. The difference relates to the Fort of Gwalior, which Scindiah thinks ought to belong to him, and the Governor-General will not give it up. I differ in opinion with the Governor-General both as to the right and policy of keeping this fort... the question turns upon a nice point of the law of nations, which the Governor-General has argued with his usual ingenuity; but I acknowledge I differ from him entirely...

You will observe that the system of moderation and conciliation by which, whether it be right or wrong, I made the treaties of peace... is now given up. Our enemies are much disgusted, and complain loudly of our conduct and want of faith...²

I am disgusted beyond measure with the whole concern [he wrote his friend Malcolm] and I would give a large sum if I had had nothing to do with the treaties of peace, and if I could now get rid of all anxiety upon the subject. All parties were delighted with the peace, but the demon of ambition appears now to have pervaded all, and each endeavours, by forcing constructions, to gain as much as he can.³

The Deccan being now at peace, Arthur seems to have felt as if his work in India was drawing to a close, and the desire for home began to stir forcibly within him. He therefore wrote on April 23rd to General Lake,* the Commander-

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IV, p. 357.* ² *Ibid., pp. 384, 385.*

³ *Despatches, Vol. III, p. 514.*

* Lake, Gerard, General, 1st Viscount Lake of Delhi and Leswaree, 1744-1808. Commander-in-Chief in India 1800-5.

in-Chief of India, for permission to return to Europe, giving as his reason that his staff appointment made eighteen months previously had not been confirmed from England.

Under these circumstances [he observes] . . . it has become of an ambiguous nature: there is reason to doubt whether it meets with the approbation of His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief* . . . and I am not desirous to remain in a military situation in His Majesty's service, my appointment to which has not been approved by His Royal Highness and by His Majesty.¹

The thought of his brother leaving India greatly disturbed Richard's equanimity, and anxious letters were posted from Bengal.

Lord Wellesley has this day [May 25th] received intimation from the Commander-in-Chief of your intention to return to Europe [wrote Major Shawe]. . . . I cannot describe to you the degree of uneasiness which the bare idea of your departure from India excited in Lord Wellesley's mind.²

There were, however, other reasons besides the one given to General Lake which induced Arthur to think of going home. He felt he had been long enough in India, and was desirous of seeing service in the wider field of Europe. His health, too, was another reason; ". . . I have been a good deal annoyed by the rheumatism in my back," he wrote Major Shawe, "for which living in a tent during another monsoon is not a very good remedy . . ."³

But for the moment his departure did not appear imminent as in June he went on active service again, having received orders from the Governor-General to co-operate with General Lake against Holkar, who was running amuck in Hindustan.

In spite of this, however, he still hoped to be able to go home in October, though he was willing to give up this desire should his brother have any real need for his remaining.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IV*, p. 377.

² *British Museum Add. MS. 13778, folio 99.*

³ *Despatches, Vol. II*, p. 293.

* Of England. The Duke of York.

Events, however, were happening in the immediate theatre of war which caused the Governor-General to change his plans. Holkar was now in full retreat before Lake's forces, and on June 18th General Wellesley received orders to break up the army.

He was now free to leave India as soon as he had wound up public affairs. His plan was to pay a short visit to Seringapatam and Madras, and to repair to Calcutta sometime in August.

Richard, not being quite sure of the inscrutable Arthur's intentions, was champing with anxiety lest he should depart from India without first seeing him.

His Lordship has already apprized you of his anxiety to secure the advantage of your judgement and experience in the decision of several political and military questions of the utmost importance . . . [wrote Major Shawe]. In addition to these public considerations his Lordship desires me to say that after a separation of five years the desire to see you once more before you quit India has a naturally great share in the anxiety with which he wishes to urge you to come to Bengal.¹

On June the 24th General Wellesley took farewell of his army at Poonah, and the middle of July saw him home again in Seringapatam, whose people waited with affectionate pride for the return of their beloved ruler. It was nearly eighteen months since he left them ; and now he was coming back a mighty conqueror, crowned with the laurels of Assye and Argaum.

But it was not for his victories only that they loved and revered him, dear as these were to native pride ; it was for the straightforwardness of his dealings, the impartiality of his justice, and above all, for the ceaseless care he had bestowed upon their welfare from the first moment that he had shouldered the burden of government. Their gratitude flowed out towards him, and found expression in the beautiful address of welcome which must ever remain as the crowning honour of his Indian career.

¹ *British Museum Add. MS. 13778, folio 127.*

We, the native inhabitants of Seringapatam [it ran], have reposed for five auspicious years under the shadow of your protection. We have felt, even during your absence, in the midst of battle and of victory, that your care for our prosperity had been extended to us in as ample a manner as if no other object had occupied your mind. We are preparing to perform, in our several castes, the duties of thanksgiving and of sacrifice to the preserving God, who has brought you back in safety, and we present ourselves in person to express our joy.

As your labours have been crowned with victory, so may your repose be graced with honors. May you long continue personally to dispense to us that full stream of security and happiness, which we first received with wonder, and continue to enjoy with gratitude; and when greater affairs shall call you from us, may the God of all castes and all nations deign to hear with favour our humble and constant prayers for your health, your glory and your happiness.¹

General Wellesley remained only a few days at Seringapatam, and by the middle of August was at Calcutta, well stored with information for the benefit of his expectant brother.

His hopes of returning to England in October, however, were speedily knocked on the head by bad news from the war zone (where Holkar had rallied and won a considerable victory),* and by November 3rd he was back at Seringapatam preparatory to joining the army in the Deccan.

An attack of fever and ague, however, delayed his departure for a couple of days, during which time accounts arrived of the victories of Generals Lake and Fraser over Holkar at Furrukhabad and Deeg which looked as if the war were nearly at an end.

I hope that we shall take advantage of this great success against Holkar [wrote General Wellesley to Major Shawe] to adopt a conciliatory language and policy with all the native powers, and take my word for it, the peace will be permanent; if we adopt the other line, we shall have war immediately.²

The defeat of Holkar, in General Wellesley's opinion, rendered it unnecessary for him to march to the Deccan.

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. II, p. 345.

² *Ibid.*, p. 489.

* Over Colonel Monson's force.

I acknowledge, however, [he wrote Major Shawe] that I have determined not to go . . . not without a considerable degree of doubt and hesitation. I know that all classes of the people look up to me, and it will be difficult for another officer to take my place. I also know that my presence there would be useful in the settlement of many points which remain unsettled, and which probably will require time and peace to bring to a conclusion. But these circumstances are not momentary; whenever I should depart, the same inconvenience would be felt . . . I certainly do not propose to spend my life in the Deccan . . .

If my services were absolutely necessary for the security of the British Empire, or to ensure its peace, I should not hesitate a moment about staying, even for years . . .¹

In spite of Arthur's intense desire to go home, he continued to delay his departure, turning the matter over in his mind this way and that, for fear lest inclination should prejudice his sense of duty. "I have no confidence in my own judgement", he was writing Major Shawe a month later, "in any case in which my own wishes are involved. . . ."²

Nevertheless, on February the 1st he booked his passage for England, though he was ready to cancel it at a moment's notice, the extraordinary indifference he exhibited about his quarters on the voyage showing his acute anxiety to depart. For Destiny was now pulling hard upon his life-line, and would not ease up until she saw him homeward bound.

I am not very particular about accommodation [he stated to the ship's agent], and I would take any rather than lose the opportunity, if circumstances should permit my departure; and I don't care a great deal about the price. I should prefer, however, either half a roundhouse or the starboard side of a great cabin; and I don't much care who the captain is, or what the ship.³

He took now a last farewell of Mysore, and set out for Madras, from whence he was to embark, leaving behind him many sad hearts and a void which it was felt could never be filled. For Arthur Wellesley had been something more than a governor; he had been a human being. This prac-

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. II, pp. 519, 520, 521. ² *Ibid.*, pp. 572, 573.

³ *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. IV, p. 487.

tical, energetic British soldier with his reserved and somewhat aloof exterior had been indeed the father of his people. No one could ever take his place.

The cordial and efficient support afforded by the Hon. Major-General Wellesley to the Government of Mysore, on all occasions even during his absence [wrote Major Wilks to the Governor of Madras], has not only prevented inconvenience, but has perhaps been essential to the prosperity of the country. I am far from intending an unbecoming compliment to that officer, at the expense of others, in stating a doubt, whether the same extent of support may be always afforded by his successors; because the actual duties of that command can never be made to prescribe the parental description of care with which the Hon. Major-General Wellesley has guarded the authority of the Government of Mysore.¹

We pray to God to grant you health and a safe and pleasant voyage to Europe [said the inhabitants of Seringapatam when he had finally to leave them], but we earnestly hope, and look with anxiety, for the period of your speedy return to this country, once more to extend and uphold that protection over us, which your extensive local knowledge of our customs and manners is so capable of affording.²

But they were to look for his return in vain, for his work in India was done.

At Madras the sadness of parting was broken by the meeting with an old friend, Sir John Cradock,* who had just arrived from England to succeed General Stuart as Commander-in-Chief of the Madras army. Arthur had been much looking forward to this meeting.

The length of time which has elapsed since I have seen you [he wrote Sir John, from Seringapatam], has by no means abated the warmth of the affection which I have always felt for you, and you will easily believe the pleasure with which I have perused the expression of similar sentiments on your part. . . .

I shall go to Madras with every disposition to be of service to you.

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. II, p. 484.*

² *Ibid., pp. 607, 608.*

* Cradock, Lieut.-General Sir John Francis, 1762-1839. Afterwards Lord Howden. Succeeded Lieut.-General Stuart as Commander-in-Chief of Madras army. The Vellore Mutiny of 1806 broke out during his command. Changed his name to Caradoc in 1820.

I will give you all the information that I possess upon every subject upon which you will require it, and I shall be happy if I can be of any use to you in the commencement of your career in this country.¹

It was Sir John Cradock who, in a somewhat original manner, invested Arthur with the Order of the Bath which had been conferred upon him by the British Government for his service in India. "A story is told", says George Elers, "that Sir John got General Wellesley's servant to bring his master's coat to him, and placed the Star of the Order upon it before he got up in the morning, and then enjoyed Sir Arthur's surprise."²

General Wellesley remained about a month at Madras before sailing, during which time he was principally occupied with the winding up of affairs and writing letters of farewell. One of the most interesting of these was his parting letter to Purneah, the Chief Minister of the Native Government of Mysore, which shows the sympathetic relations existing between General Wellesley and the Native Administration.

I part with you with the greatest regret [he wrote], and I shall ever continue to feel the most lively interest for the honor and prosperity of the government of the Rajah of Mysore over which you preside.

For six years I have been concerned in the affairs of the Mysore government, and I have contemplated with the greatest satisfaction its increasing prosperity under your administration.

Experience has proved the wisdom of the arrangement which was first made of the government of Mysore*; and I am convinced that under no other management would it have been possible for the British Government to derive such advantages from the country which you have governed, as I have enjoyed in the various difficulties with which we have contended since your authority was established.

Every principle of gratitude, therefore, for many acts of personal kindness to myself, and a strong sense of the public benefits which have been derived from your administration, render me anxious for its continuance and for its increasing prosperity . . .

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IV, p. 483.* ² *Elers Memoirs, p. 166.*

* Purneah had also been Chief Minister to Tippoo Sultaun, and it was a wise experiment to continue him in his post.

Upon the occasion of taking my leave of you, I must take the liberty to recommend to you to persevere in the laudable path which you have hitherto followed. Let the prosperity of the country be your great object ; protect the ryots and traders, and allow no man, whether vested with authority or otherwise, to oppress them with impunity ; do justice to every man ; and attend to the wholesome advice which will be given you by the British Resident ; and you may depend upon it that your government will be as prosperous and as permanent as I wish it to be . . .¹

Before leaving India, Arthur did not neglect to make careful provision for the future of his little protégé, Salabut Khan.

I herewith enclose a bond [he wrote the Magistrate of Seringapatam] . . . for the amount of one thousand star pagodas.

I wish to place this sum of money in the charge of the Court of Seringapatam for the benefit of Salabut Khan, the son, or the adopted son, of the late Dhoondiah Waugh.

I am desirous that the Court should be his guardian, and should superintend his education, the expense of which will be defrayed out of the interest of this sum, and a sum of two hundred pagodas . . . allotted by me for his support . . .

I am desirous that, if not absolutely necessary for his advancement, the principal of one thousand star pagodas should never be given to Salabut Khan ; but the interest is to be applied to pay the expense of his education, and to be given to himself when he will arrive at years of discretion, and will be no longer under the guardianship of the Court.²*

This incident never ceases to open up a train of speculative thought. What was the psychology of Arthur Wellesley's quixotic action in saddling himself with the child of his defeated foe ? Why could he not have interested the Government on his behalf ? Why must he take it all upon himself ?

Was there some subconscious feeling of a personal debt—

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. II, pp. 593, 594.

² *Supp. Dispatches*, Vol. IV, p. 500.

* When he grew up Salabut Khan was taken into the service of the Rajah of Mysore. He had only a short life, for he died of cholera at the age of 25.

that he had deprived the child of his protector, and must therefore make good the loss?

There is much one would like to know concerning the relations of these two, the white man and the little Indian child. That they were happy ones, admits of no possible doubt, for Arthur Wellesley's love of children was proverbial. But it would be interesting to know the other side of the picture. Did Salabut Khan make a hero of his protector, the great white warrior? Did he love him and long for the moments spent in the sunshine of his presence? Did he grieve at his departure?

These things are hidden in the records of the past. But though hidden they will never be lost, for the ripples of this act of mercy, thrown like a stone into the waters of time, go on for ever into the ocean of eternity.

There was also another protégé who occupied Arthur's thoughts before leaving India.

Upon my departure from hence [he wrote Major Shawe] I am exceedingly anxious about the fate of my Brigade Major, Lieutenant Colin Campbell, of the 78th regt. . . . from whom I have received great assistance . . . I did not know him by name when I saw him distinguish himself in the storm of Ahmednuggur, and I immediately appointed him my Brigade Major; and in the battle of Assye he had either two or three horses shot under him, and ever since he has rendered me most important assistance.

He is only a Lieutenant in the 78th regiment, but I have frequently recommended him to General Lake for promotion, and he will get it by seniority in his regiment, it is to be hoped, before much time will elapse.

But in the mean time, I should be much flattered and obliged . . . if the Governor-General would take him into his family.¹

A few days after writing the above Arthur Wellesley sailed for England on board H.M.S. *Trident*,* and another chapter of his life was closed.

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. II, p. 604.*

* Having paid forfeit to the Captain of the Indianaman, from whom he had taken a passage, General Wellesley accepted an invitation from the Admiral to sail in H.M.S. *Trident*.

It had been a successful chapter, and he was several rungs farther up the ladder than when he started forth.

India had fulfilled her bargain with him as he with her, and both were mutually satisfied with each other. It was hard to lose him, but the hour had struck for his departure. So the warm foster-mother who had only borrowed him for a time sent him back where he belonged, to the cold little mother lying amongst the northern seas, who waited anxiously for her son's return.

He broke his journey at St. Helena, arriving there on June 20th, after a fine though tedious passage from Madras.

In spite of the good weather, Arthur suffered badly from sea-sickness on the first part of the voyage, which might have been aggravated by the condition of his health on embarking. “ . . . I am convinced ”, he told his friend Malcolm, “ that, if I had not quitted India, I should have had a serious fit of illness. I was wasting away daily, and latterly, when at Madras, I found my strength failed, which had always before held out.”¹

The voyage, as soon as he got his sea legs, did wonders for him, and the climate of St. Helena, which he considered the most healthy he had ever lived in, finished the cure. “ In short,” he continued in his letter to Malcolm, “ I do not recollect for many years to have been so well as I have felt latterly, and particularly since I have been here. I have scarcely any rheumatism or lumbago.”²

On July 9th the sojourn at St. Helena ended, and H.M.S. *Trident* resumed her voyage.

There was plenty of time on the journey home for Arthur to look back and ruminate upon his Indian career. It could have been nothing but a pleasant occupation, for he had much to congratulate himself upon. He was going home with an assured position ; he was somebody now, no longer a struggling nonentity on trial, but a person who had won a definite

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IV, p. 509.*

² *Ibid.*

status in the world. His niche was becoming deeper and wider, there was now no chance of his being dislodged.

His financial position also was improved ; he had no longer to worry over ways and means.

He brought home with him [says Sir John Fortescue] a little fortune of some thirty or forty thousand pounds, the great bulk of it prize money for the campaign of Seringapatam, and every penny of it legitimately gained. Many a man in his place would have accumulated by means which were not frowned upon, three or four times that sum, for it must be remembered that in Mysore he was an absolute autocrat. . . .¹

But if he could congratulate himself upon a certain amount of worldly success, he had infinitely more to his credit in the way of moral achievement, though his modesty might have prevented him from seeing it in that light. He could not, however, but have admitted that the task assigned to him in India had been well and faithfully done, and in a manner that was highly honourable to himself. He had carried the banner of his ideals triumphantly aloft, never had it been lowered, and he left it nailed for ever to the mast of Indian history. There is much to be proud of in the words inscribed upon that banner, words beside which Assye and Argaum pale into insignificance ; for as the wind bellies out its folds, Honour, Justice, Mercy, and Integrity will be found written thereon, in characters that do not fade.

Arthur Wellesley's career in India is the prologue to his later career. It is the indication of what was to be expected from him in his dealings with his fellow men ; for in India he ripened to the full stature of his manhood, and the pattern of his character became clearly defined.

It is interesting to observe the consistency of his future behaviour. It is exactly in accordance with the past. The same ideals are upheld, the same decencies of life are insisted upon, the same integrity is rigorously maintained. The same passion for order and discipline characterizes his military system, the same scrupulous honesty is observed in obtaining

¹ *Fortescue*, p. 55.

supplies, the same protective care is shown to the inhabitants of an invaded country.

That great epoch of his career towards which his face is now set, where he is to be tried and proved in the battlefields of Europe, is but India over again. The scene is changed, but the man and his actions are just the same.

There is perhaps no race or races of people who understood Arthur Wellesley as did the natives of India. Apart from his military prowess which raised him aloft from the Oriental point of view, he was in their eyes the ideal ruler. That dignity of bearing and unconscious aloofness born of a certain loneliness of spirit, that self-restraint and slight austerity, were to them the natural and fitting adjuncts of one in his position. They judged him not, by the words he spoke, but by his actions. They knew their welfare was safe in his hands, they rested secure in the knowledge of his understanding justice. They trusted him and he never betrayed that trust.

It must not be supposed that the sympathetic understanding and consideration displayed by Arthur Wellesley towards the natives of India, betokened a policy of sentimental weakness. Had this been the case, he would never have acquired that powerful influence he wielded over the native population. He could punish as well as protect, and the wrong-doer was as certain of retribution as the innocent of protection.

His method of dealing with certain riots, which occurred in Seringapatam during the first year of his governorship, left no doubt in anybody's mind as to how all such affairs would be treated.

It is necessary that I should inform you [he wrote to the secretary of the Mysore Government] that I have been obliged to employ the troops to quell a disturbance . . . no efforts of the police officers could disperse the mobs.

Under these circumstances, I thought it proper to order out small parties of cavalry and Native infantry from the camp, and a small party of European infantry from the garrison, against the largest mob. . . .

Four of them . . . were killed, and two wounded; and this mob, as well as the others, dispersed immediately.

I attribute the folly of their obstinacy, and their absurdity in supposing that I should sit quiet . . . to nothing excepting to the experience they have had of success, from too much indulgence on former similar occasions. . . .¹

Plunder, too, received short shift at Arthur Wellesley's hands and his punishment of that offence was as severe as that eventually practised in the Peninsula:

. . . one of the camp followers was hanged yesterday for stealing a cow from a village [records Major-General Nicolls in his journal], and this evening two villagers were executed in the same manner, for binding a Sepoy, and carrying him off with an intent to rob, if not to murder him. . . .²

Concerning a couple of murderers the following terse orders were issued: ". . . I request that they may be hanged; and let the cause of their punishment be published in the bazaar by beat of tom-tom . . ." A further comment against a native addicted to plunder adds, "that if he does not pay for the horses, bullocks, and articles plundered, he shall be hanged also".³

The result of discipline is an orderly army, and Major-General Nicolls again bears testimony to the good effects achieved under General Wellesley's system:

. . . although this division [he records] which, including followers, who are the most determined plunderers, cannot be reckoned at less than 40,000 men, has now marched three times over the same road, and been encamped . . . for four days, not a village has been pillaged or injured, indeed rarely entered . . . stacked grain remains now untouched; that in the village granaries has never been drawn from thence, but at fair prices. . . . Had any native army passed once, it is not improbable that it could not, without difficulty, have subsisted itself a second time on the same route.⁴

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. I, pp. 484, 485.*

² *Quoted in Despatches, Vol. I, p. 535, footnote.*

³ *Despatches, Vol. III, p. 496.*

⁴ *Ibid., Vol. I, p. 478, footnote.*

Perhaps one of the greatest services Arthur Wellesley rendered to England during his sojourn in India was the premium he set upon the word of an Englishman, insisting on its strict observance no matter to whom it was given.

An attempt to evade paying a ransom to some Patans met with his strong disapproval, and his comments on the matter embody his principles.

In my opinion [he observes] . . . every attempt to procure the release of Futtu Sing Rao and his mother, without paying the demanded ransom, or after paying a part of it, is inconsistent with the scrupulous good faith which ought to direct all our transactions with the natives.¹

But running like a golden thread throughout Arthur Wellesley's Indian career—as indeed it runs through the whole fabric of his life—is the deep love of peace he held in his heart. Peace not only between nation and nation, but between man and man. Again and again in his Indian correspondence, one finds him acting as peace-maker, patching up quarrels between officers, smoothing out differences between government officials and striving for harmony between the different Governments.

My idea in this [he wrote to his eldest brother when the latter first became Governor-General] is to avoid disputes upon petty subjects, which have one effect only, that of erecting little men . . . who are to manage them, into great ones. Small faults and omissions in the obedience to the orders of the Supreme Government, provided they do not lead to bad consequences, ought, for the same reason, to be passed over.²

Even the native chiefs, toughest of all nuts to crack, were counselled to forgive their enemies.

One of the resources which I recommended to his Highness's attention was to pardon those of his subjects who had offended him [wrote General Wellesley on the Peshwah's re-instatement] and to return their houses and property, as the first step towards the establishment of tranquillity . . .³

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. III, p. 304. ² *Supp. Dispatches*, Vol. I, p. 109.

³ *Dispatches*, Vol. II, p. 188.

Had Arthur Wellesley been able to remain in India, had he possessed the gift of physical immortality enabling him to stay and guide her through the troubles that lay ahead, how different might have been the position of affairs to-day.

It is a significant fact that before he left the country an old Native Officer came to him and implored him not to leave them ; and when he found that his wish could not be granted he gave vent to the following prophetic remark. "Ah, then, something will go wrong ; those who know and understand us are leaving us ; mischief is brewing and now men are coming who will only hasten the danger."¹

But the secret of Arthur Wellesley's successful work in India lay within the man himself.

For [says Sir John Fortescue] he was not content merely to put down that which was wrong ; he strove unceasingly to exalt the right, and to raise the standard of duty and integrity. And he brought to the task the mightiest strength that can reinforce an indomitable will, clean hands and a clean heart.²

¹ *Ellesmere*, p. 130.

² *Fortescue*, p. 40.

Chapter Seven

HOME AGAIN

He doeth well that rather serveth the community than
his own ends.

THOMAS A KEMPIS.

THE arrival of a prominent Anglo-Indian in England is always disillusioning, and how much more so must it have been to the man who had occupied a position analogous to that of crown prince; who had been the second most important person in the country he was leaving; who had left, moreover, in a blaze of triumph, with a record of a brilliant career behind.

The mantle of glamour fell from Arthur's shoulders as his feet touched English soil, and he slipped quietly and unobtrusively into a country which cared little or nothing for his military triumphs in far-off India, and knew and cared still less about the splendid work he had been doing for his country in that distant land. The sunshine of public adulation was behind him, an atmosphere of chilliness bordering on disapproval was before.

His position was almost apologetic, the task that lay in front of him the unpleasant one of explanation—the explanation of Lord Wellesley's Indian policy which had not found favour with the Home Government.

Trouble had been brewing for some time between Lord Wellesley and the Court of Directors who, as a trading company, were unable to appreciate the progressive and imperial policy of the Governor-General.

The war with the Maráthás [says Malleson], a war which . . . was forced upon the Marquess by Sindhia, had touched to the quick the money-grubbing instincts of the members of that honourable Court. When the news reached England that war had broken out, Indian stocks, which had been at 215, fell to 160. This was naturally attributed to the policy of Lord Wellesley. It was impossible for a Governor-General to commit a greater crime. There arose, then, against the man who was securing permanent security for British interests in India an exceeding great and bitter cry. The proprietors of India stock urged on the directors, and these, nothing loth, used every endeavour to heap insult after insult on their energetic servant in India.¹

But perhaps Lord Wellesley's greatest crime was that he was the right man in the right place, always an unpalatable state of affairs to Home Governments.

Shortly after his brother Arthur left India, the Governor-General resigned, and the British Government expressed their feelings towards him by appointing Lord Cornwallis * as his successor, a man whose ideas and policy with regard to India at that particular time were the exact antithesis of the retiring Governor's.

This, then, was the state of affairs when Arthur arrived in England ; not a very cheering atmosphere to walk into after nearly eight years of faithful service to his country overseas. Yet such things troubled him not at all ; he was conscious of having done his duty and that was all that mattered. Besides, he was genuinely pleased to be home again, delighted to see his friends, and full of the thrill of the future. Life was intensely interesting, and for the moment he had a definite object to accomplish. His brother must be vindicated ; his brother's government must be justified and upheld, and

¹ *Malleson, pp. 134, 135.*

* Cornwallis, Charles, 1st Marquess and 2nd Earl, 1738-1805. Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in India 1786-93. Went out to India again in a similar capacity in 1805, but died shortly after arrival. He went to India with the express intention of stopping what he termed "this most unprofitable and ruinous warfare" (*Cornwallis Correspondence*, Vol. III, p. 532). *Dictionary of National Biography.*

with all his accustomed ardour he threw himself into the task.

He wasted no time, but immediately dashed about interviewing the 'powers that be'; Castlereagh,* who received him "with great kindness and cordiality"¹; Lord Camden at East Sheen, who assured him that Pitt's friendship for Lord Wellesley was as warm as ever, and that he could reckon on his support; Lord Bathurst† at Cirencester, and then the great Pitt‡ himself, with whom he rode from Wimbledon Common to London.

We rode very slowly [he wrote his brother Richard] and I had a full opportunity of discussing with him and explaining all the points in our late system in India, to which objections had been made, which were likely to make any impression upon him . . . I explained to him, as I had done to Lord Camden, how much you had felt his silence upon all the events of your administration, and your apprehension that its general tenor had not been approved by him; and I told him that I was convinced that you would receive the greatest satisfaction when you would read the account of the handsome manner in which he had spoken of you in a late debate. He then spoke of you in the strongest and handsomest terms, and said that till the late opportunity, of which he had availed himself, none had offered in which he could have spoken . . . I have seen Pitt several times since; he has always been very civil to me, and has mentioned you in the most affectionate terms.²

But the famous statesman seems also to have taken a great liking to Lord Wellesley's brother Arthur:

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IV*, p. 534. ² *Ibid.*, pp. 537, 538.

* Stewart, Robert, Viscount Castlereagh, 1769-1822, the famous Tory statesman. He held many Government posts, and was at this particular period President of the Board of Control, and had been much mixed up in Indian affairs. In July 1805 became Secretary of State for War, without, however, relinquishing his presidency of the Board of Control. He was a great friend of Arthur Wellesley, whom he had known in his early youth in Ireland.

† Bathurst, Henry, 3rd Earl. Statesman. 1762-1834. He had been on the Board of Control 1793-1802.

‡ Pitt, William, the great statesman, 1759-1806. He became Prime Minister before he was 25 in 1783, and again in May 1804.

He has given me such clear details upon affairs in India [he observed to his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope] and he talked of them, too, as if he had been a surgeon of a regiment, and had nothing to do with them; so that I know not which to admire most, his modesty or his talents, and yet the fate of India depends upon them.¹

On Richard's return to England, Pitt again expressed his favourable opinion of the younger brother.

Amongst other topics [observed Lord Wellesley] he told me with great kindness and feeling that, since he had seen me, he had been happy to become acquainted with my brother Arthur, of whom he spoke in the warmest terms of commendation. He said, "I never met any military officer with whom it was so easy to converse: he states every difficulty before he undertakes any service, but none after he has undertaken it."²

From which it will be seen that even in the bigger world of England, Arthur was already beginning to make himself felt.

The Court of Directors, however, chose to slight him:

... Upon my arrival I proposed to wait upon them [he told his eldest brother] ... and the Chairman recommended that I should withdraw my proposition because it had no precedent. The real reason, however, for which they refused to receive me was, that they were apprehensive lest by any mark of personal attention to me they should afford ground for a belief that they approved of any of the measures in the transaction of which I had been concerned.³

There were, however, other and pleasanter duties for Arthur to perform. Family visits to be paid, nephews and nieces to be inspected, strands of affection and friendship to be gathered up and woven anew into the pattern of his life.

Almost one of the first things he did on arrival was to go and see his eldest brother's children.

I saw Richard in London [he wrote Lord Wellesley] ... and I think him one of the finest young men I ever met with. ... The other two boys are also very fine fellows, and the girls (particularly the youngest) are very handsome and accomplished. This is some consolation, even

¹ *Paston*, p. 262.

² *Quarterly Review*.

³ *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. IV, p. 540.

if your services should not have been considered and treated as they deserve.¹

Then as soon as affairs became less pressing he slipped off to Cheltenham for a rest, stopping at Stowe en route for a couple of days with his old chief, the Marquess of Buckingham.

At Cheltenham the young Vicomtesse de Gontaut-Biron* took him in tow, being detailed for this pleasant occupation by her friend Mrs. Wellesley Pole.† “He knows no one there,” she wrote, “and it would be a charity to look after him.”²

The Frenchwoman was delighted with the commission. Her friends, Lady Templeton and Miss Upton, however, refused to share her enthusiasm and were frankly bored at the idea of looking after a stranger whom nobody at Cheltenham knew.

Nothing daunted, the Vicomtesse set off for the Pump Room, dragging the reluctant Miss Upton in her wake.

Quickly running over the list of arrivals, she found the name Wellesley, and read it aloud.

A gentleman beside her was engaged in a like occupation ; putting his finger on a name he smiled, and turning to the Vicomtesse observed, ‘Madame de Gontaut?’

“Rien de plus piquant,” declares that lady, “we had never seen each other before, and here we were already acquainted.”³

Miss Upton is presented, but refuses to unbend. Sir Arthur gives his arm to the Vicomtesse, and they go out together. Suddenly the lady is covered with confusion, for an inefficient garter leaves its post and falls at the feet of her cavalier.

“‘To lose one’s garter’, in broad daylight ! In full view

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IV, p. 540.*

² *Memoires de la Duchesse de Gontaut, p. 80.*

³ *Ibid.*

* Afterwards Duchesse de Gontaut. A French ‘emigrée’, who with her husband and children had taken refuge in England from the Revolution.

† Wife of Arthur’s brother William.

of everyone ; in England ! I confess it made me blush," says the Frenchwoman.¹

But what is the fall of a garter to the victor of Assye. He stoops to pick it up, and with a gracious smile, and in excellent taste observes, "Now surely is the moment to say, 'Honi soit qui mal y pense'."

"It's lucky it was a new one," murmurs Miss Upton in its owner's ear.

Sir Arthur is borne home in triumph, and the English ladies capitulate.

Lady Templeton invited him to dine every day. Miss Upton sang, he was delighted with her talent. As for me [declares the enthusiastic Vicomtesse], I was enchanted with his simple candour : he talked to us of India, never of his victories, which we heard of through every letter that came to us. . . .²

By November Sir Arthur was in harness again, having been appointed to command a brigade which formed part of an expeditionary force proceeding to Hanover under Lord Cathcart.* But the great French victory at Austerlitz rendered it expedient to withdraw Lord Cathcart's force, and General Wellesley returned to England without having seen any service.

He arrived in London towards the latter part of February, and soon after, he was appointed to command a brigade of infantry stationed at Hastings. Not a very thrilling prospect after having had the command of armies in the field. Nevertheless, this humble task received the same earnest attention as the more important ones, and to a friend who commiserated with him at being placed in such a position he made the much quoted and now historical remark,

"I am nimmukwallah, as we say in the East ; that is, I have ate of the King's salt, and, therefore, I conceive it to be my duty to serve with

¹ *Memoires de la Duchesse de Gontaut*, p. 81.

² *Ibid.*

* Cathcart, Sir William Schaw, 1755-1843. 10th Baron Cathcart in the Peerage of Scotland and 1st Viscount and Earl Cathcart in the Peerage of the United Kingdom.

unhesitating zeal and cheerfulness, when and wherever the King or his government may think proper to employ me.”¹

He was not, however, completely overlooked, for on January 30th he had been granted a military ‘plum’, and appointed to the Colonelcy of the 33rd Regiment* on the death of Lord Cornwallis, its former chief. This attention gave great satisfaction to his brother Richard, who in a letter to the Commander-in-Chief expressed his most dutiful thanks.

Richard was now back in England again, and not enjoying himself at all. Unlike Arthur, he was greatly affected by the disillusionment of his homecoming. The descent from the prerogatives of royalty to the life of an ordinary mortal was to him a very painful affair.

In no way is the contrast in the characters of the two brothers more apparent than in the way they reacted to externals. Richard was a slave to them, to Arthur they mattered not at all. Richard simply could not function in obscurity, he required the limelight and a suitable stage setting; given these he was superb.

Arthur cared for none of these things, if anything he disliked them, and his work retained its high quality in whatever situation he was placed. It was this impersonalness and independence of externals that enabled him to go further in life than his brilliant brother, for it freed him from the thraldom of circumstances. Richard, on the other hand, was handicapped by the shackles of his personality.

Apart from the usual Anglo-Indian disenchantment, there was everything to make Lord Wellesley depressed. For one thing, he certainly did not receive that cordial welcome which, considering his work in India, he might have expected,

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. II, p. 616.*

* It may puzzle the civilian reader as to why Arthur Wellesley, who had formerly commanded the 33rd, should now, when he is a Major-General, be appointed to its Colonelcy. The post of Colonel of a regiment is a post of honour, and carries with it a comfortable salary. It is quite distinct from the post of Colonel Commanding.

"instead of being saluted as a conqueror, it was seriously proposed that he should be tried as a culprit".¹

In addition to the hostility of the Court of Directors, other unpleasantness was brewing. Whilst the late Governor-General was upon the high seas, enduring the tedium of the homeward voyage, an ex-trader from India by the name of Paull, who had received great kindness at Lord Wellesley's hands, was busy stirring up mud and venom to slap in the face of the Marquess on his arrival.

Paull, who had become friendly with Lord Wellesley's enemies on his return to England, entered Parliament in June 1805, and from that time onward dedicated himself to the persecution of the late Governor-General, and made a public attack in Parliament upon the latter's Indian administration.

It was, indeed, a miserable homecoming for Richard. To make matters worse, Pitt, who was a personal friend, died shortly after his arrival, and the Marquess was thus deprived of a strong supporter who would have squashed from the outset this unjust and unwarrantable attack.

As it was, it trickled on lamely until May 1808, when the charges against Lord Wellesley were publicly squashed, and a resolution passed in Parliament approving of his conduct in India.

In April of that same year Paull committed suicide, after a night of heavy drinking and gambling, in which he lost £300.

Richard's troubles caused the clan Wellesley to rally round him, and on April 12th (1806) Arthur entered Parliament in his defence, having been elected M.P. for Rye, and ten days later was standing up for his brother's Indian policy in the House of Commons, which he continued to do at intervals throughout the session.

Perhaps it is not too much to claim that the advent of the Wellesleys in India marked a new era in Indian history.

Hitherto that part of India under the direction of the East

¹ *Torrens, p. 305.*

India Company had been run as a commercial undertaking, without much regard or consideration for the peoples of the country.

Lord Wellesley took a wider vision. He dreamed of a united Empire whose peoples should enjoy justice and prosperity under the protection of the flag he served.

The result of his rule was a great purging of the country from old abuses and a far juster treatment of the native population.

... Of all the changes effected by the brothers Wellesley [says Sir Herbert Maxwell], none was so vital—so valuable to British ascendancy in India—as the end which, between them, they put to the old system of private peculation and corruption. The administrative body became for the first time what it had long been in name, the *Honourable East India Company*. . . .¹

Arthur had also been doing other things in the year 1806 besides defending his brother Richard, for on April 10th he became a married man.

The bride was Kitty Pakenham, his old love, which on the face of it looked like a pretty little story of romance, and was so considered by the sentimentalists—at least at first.

... One of those tales of real life [writes Maria Edgeworth *] in which the romance is far superior to the generality of fictions. I hope [she adds almost prophetically] the imaginations of this hero and heroine have not been too much exalted, and that they may not find the enjoyment of a happiness so long wished for inferior to what they expected.²

It was all done in a hurry in one of Arthur's bursts of quixotic zeal which swept all before it; possibly the same sort of impulse that prompted him to assume the responsibility of little Salabut Khan. As soon as he perceived himself to be under an obligation to marry Kitty, nothing else mattered,

¹ *Sir Herbert Maxwell*, Vol. I, p. 72.

² *Maria Edgeworth*, *Letters*, Vol. I, pp. 149, 150.

* Maria Edgeworth, 1767-1849. A well-known novelist of this period. She was a great friend of Kitty Pakenham.



“KITTY.”

it must be done, and he did it, somewhat blindly, for it was close upon ten years since they had seen each other.

He certainly was not thinking of matrimony when he arrived in England ; his mind was full of public matters and Richard's troubles, which swamped all else. He was out sailing on the big ocean of life, and had no inclination to turn down pretty backwaters. It is quite certain that he was not dying of a lover's impatience, for he had been six months at home before he made a move in Kitty's direction. That which seems to have tempted him to gamble with his life's happiness was the chance remark of a mutual friend, Lady Olivia Sparrow, " who twitted him with heartlessness to her bosom friend 'Kitty Pakenham', and assured him that his lady-love had never changed ".¹ On the strength of this he wrote at once to Ireland renewing his offer of marriage, and was accepted.

It is likely that his feelings at this time were somewhat mixed, and there was possibly even a certain amount of pleasurable anticipation. It was a sense of duty that had undoubtedly prompted his course of action, but underneath, there may have been other feelings to strengthen his decision. The thought of Kitty's faithful sighs during the long years of his absence was by no means an unpleasant one. It flattered him—perhaps sometimes he may have even given her a thought—she could not have been completely obliterated from his mind. He must have heard of her from time to time as people came out from home. Young Tom Pakenham, her cousin, who came out to India in 1803, would surely have mentioned Kitty in his recital of family news. Perhaps she even sent a letter in spite of her reputed denials to the contrary. She would have been something less than human if she never had. If only one could put back the hands of time and peep into the brown lacquer box standing on the table in Arthur's tent in India which contained his private correspondence !

At heart he was an idealist first and last (albeit a practical

¹ *Sir Herbert Maxwell, Vol. I, p. 78.*

one), he desired the ideal in all things, and most especially in matters of affection. Hitherto he had never found it. The years in India had been by no means barren of the feminine element, but he had left heart whole. Was it Kitty after all who was to provide that for which all men subconsciously seek? His thoughts fluttering back across the years may have lit upon the perfumed petals of an early dream, and in the fragrance of a past illusion he went forward into permanent disenchantment.

It was nobody's fault, only a case of the wrong people marrying.

He saw his mistake at once right from the first moment of meeting. There were no honeymoon thrills for him, but only a heart hunger, and a sense of something missed. Still he made the best of it, and his early married life, though unsatisfying, was not unhappy; the dream was not quite dead, echoes of it still remained; perhaps after all Kitty might one day turn out to be the perfect mate so ardently desired.

But it was not to be, for how can the dove be mated happily with the eagle, or the little ornamental pond contain the waters of the rushing mountain torrent, which finds rest only in the heaving ocean?

They were married in Ireland, and a couple of weeks later returned to England, not together, but separately, for Arthur had overstayed his leave by a day, and left his bride to be brought over by his brother Gerald,* who had married them.

The marriage caused a pleasant little sensation in their circle, and everybody was eager for gossip concerning the bride.

On May 5th she was paying a call on an Irish friend, and there Mrs. Calvert † found her.

I went to see my mother [she records] and found Lady Wellesley with her. She is just married to Sir Arthur Wellesley. . . . She is now

* The Reverend the Hon. Gerald Valerian Wellesley.

† The Hon. Mrs. Calvert, née the Hon. Frances Pery, 1767-1859. Daughter of Edmond Sexten Pery, Viscount Pery.

about two or three and thirty, and he about seven and thirty. He must have found her sadly altered, for she was a very pretty little girl, with a round face, and a fine complexion. She is now very thin and withered (I believe pining in his absence helped to make her more so). I think she looks in a consumption, which idea, a short cough increases, and I know Sir Walter Farquhar has desired her to take great care of herself. She is gentle and amiable. I hear that when someone told Sir Arthur he would find her much altered, he answered that he did not care; it was her mind he was in love with, and that could not alter.¹

But minds do alter, for they must develop or become atrophied, and it was Arthur's mind which had changed the most, for he had been riding on the crest of life's big breakers and his mind was enriched and enlarged by the experience.

Kitty, however, had been living in a placid backwater, unaffected by the currents of the outside world. It was she who had changed the least, and that was where the mischief lay—she had not kept pace with her lord's development. She was, therefore, totally unequipped for the difficult rôle she had to play, for she was destined to be the wife of the foremost man of the age, a position demanding for its success either the strongest mutual attachment, or great tact and cleverness on the part of the woman.

Poor Kitty had none of these assets—she was good, she was worthy, she was sweet—but she had no weapons with which to enter the arena of life. She was just a little country mouse. Moreover she was timid, and nothing irritated Arthur more than to have people afraid of him. This timidity was, perhaps, the keynote of her unsuccessful married life, it may even have caused her to start it with deceit, for there is a rumour that she was engaged to another suitor when Sir Arthur proposed to her the second time. She omitted, however, to tell him of this and on learning of it from another source, “he received”, says Gleig, “the impression that he had been grossly deceived, and never afterwards got rid of it”.²

¹ *Irish Beauty of the Regency*, pp. 66-7.

² *Gleig, Reminiscences*, p. 274.

Whether or no the above story is true, Kitty did not pass all the years of Arthur's absence in fruitless sighing, for two or three years before his return she seems to have considered the possibility of taking someone else as a husband.

This was Lowry Cole,* an officer who afterwards served under Wellington in the Peninsula. Kitty played fast and loose with the young man's affections, according to a member of his family, who states that "Lowry since that love affair with Kitty Pakenham seems like a burnt child to fear the fire. . . ." ¹

But at first Arthur's home life was not so bad, there may have been even a certain amount of quiet happiness. He was a married man with a home of his own, which had perhaps been one of the secret longings hidden away beneath his reserved exterior. He had at last a domestic centre. There was, too, the joy of an expected baby to look forward to, which must, for a while, have drawn him closer to the woman he had married.

As for Kitty, in spite of her fears she was probably at this time completely happy. She had got her hero, even if he was a little overwhelming ; she was married to Arthur Wellesley ; what more could any woman want ?

They took up their abode at No. 11 Harley Street, and during that summer as long as Parliament was sitting Arthur was occupied with Richard's interests.

The end of the summer saw him back at Hastings in his military Command.

He was still there in October and beginning to chafe a bit at not being sent overseas.

Another of my regiments has received orders to march to Deal [he wrote his eldest brother on October 26th], where I suppose it is to embark

¹ *Lowry Cole, p. 27.*

* Cole, Sir Galbraith Lowry, General, 1772-1842. Second son of William Willoughby Cole, 1st Earl of Enniskillen in the peerage of Ireland.

for the Continent.* If troops are to be sent into Germany, of course all other views must for the present be abandoned ; and I hope that as four out of five regiments here now have been taken from my command to be sent on service, I shall now be sent ; and I don't care in what situation ; I am only afraid that Lord Grenville does not understand that I don't want a chief command if it cannot be given to me ; and that I should be very sorry to stay at home when others go abroad, only because I cannot command in chief.¹

His wish, however, was not granted, and December finds him at Deal ; a little later he was hunting at Hatfield, after which he appears to have settled in Town again.

On February 3rd Kitty presented him with a son, who was christened Arthur Richard.† "She has a nice little boy . . ." records Mrs. Calvert who went to visit her ; "Sir Arthur was there too, and Lady Salisbury and the Ladies Cecil came in while I was there."²

Yet how strange it is that Arthur never mentioned the birth of his son in a letter which he wrote to his great friend, Colonel Malcolm, after the event. Neither does he appear to have mentioned his marriage in previous letters. Yet when the time came for Malcolm to become a benedict, Arthur's good wishes rang true. "I beg leave to congratulate you on your marriage", he wrote, "and to assure you that I rejoice most sincerely in an event which is so likely to contribute to your happiness."³

On March 25th the Grenville Ministry resigned, and a new government was formed by the Duke of Portland.‡ In this

¹ *British Museum Add. MS. 37415, folio 23.*

² *Irish Beauty of the Regency, p. 72.*

³ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. XIII, p. 289.*

* England at that time was holding in readiness a number of troops to co-operate with the Powers on the Continent, against France. There was a proposal afoot to send a force to aid Prussia.

† Marquess of Douro, and 2nd Duke of Wellington, 1807-1884. Editor of the Supplementary Despatches of the first Duke of Wellington.

‡ Bentinck, William Henry Cavendish, 3rd Duke of Portland, 1738-1809.

government Arthur was given the post of Secretary for Ireland, under the Duke of Richmond,* who was made Lord-Lieutenant.

He arrived in Dublin on April 5th and settled down immediately to his duties, a great part of which consisted in resisting the demands of *wire-pullers*. Everybody who had an iron to heat wished to do it in the Irish Secretary's fire. But the Irish Secretary's fire was heated by government coal, and the Irish Secretary steeled his heart against importunity.

... You must be aware that I am in a very delicate situation in this country [he wrote to Lady Elizabeth Pakenham on June 1st] and, being connected with it myself, it is my duty, and it is expected from me, to avoid pressing upon the government objects which may be referable only to my own views in favour of my own friends and connections . . .

I beg that you will understand that I am not desirous of getting rid of your request; but I have stated fairly to you an embarrassment which may, and indeed must, retard the accomplishment of your wishes . . .¹

Holding a civil appointment, however, did not make him forget he was a soldier, and rumours of a projected expedition overseas made him champ at the bit, and he wrote anxiously to Lord Castlereagh on the subject.

By all accounts you are advancing the preparations for your expedition to the Continent . . . I hope that you recollect what I said to you upon this subject. It may happen that you have it not in your power to employ me as I wish, and it might have happened that I should not have been so employed if I had not been appointed to the office which I fill in this country. But that will not be believed; and it will be understood and said that I had avoided or had not sought for an opportunity of serving abroad in order to hold a large civil office.

As I am determined not to give up the military profession, and as I know that I can be of no service in it unless I have the confidence and

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. V, p. 69.*

* Charles Lennox, 4th Duke of Richmond, 1764-1819. Married Lady Charlotte Gordon, eldest daughter of 4th Duke of Gordon, and had fourteen children. Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland from 1807 to 1813. A very great friend of Arthur Wellesley. He gave the famous ball at Brussels before the Battle of Waterloo. Went to Canada as Governor in 1818 and died there of hydrophobia from the bite of a pet fox.

esteem of the officers and soldiers of the army, I must shape my course in such a manner as to avoid this imputation.¹

On June 20th Arthur was back in Town again to do his share in the Parliamentary session.

But his old trade, however, kept pulling at him, and a month later he writes to the Duke of Richmond of his intention to go with the proposed Danish Expedition.

I accepted my office in Ireland solely on the condition that it should not preclude me from such service when an opportunity should offer ; and I am convinced that, although you may feel some inconvenience from my temporary absence . . . you would be the last man to desire or to wish that I should do anything with which I should not be satisfied myself. And I acknowledge that I should not be satisfied if I allowed any opportunity of service to pass by without offering myself . . .

I have not written to Lady Wellesley upon this subject ; and it is as well not to say anything to her about it till it will be positively settled that we are to go.²

To which the Duke made reply :

Dear Arthur, I must own you are quite right to offer your services for this expedition. At the same time I cannot but lament your absence. I trust it will not be for any length of time, and that as soon as the expedition is over, either favourably or otherwise, you will return here. Your absence even in England is certainly inconvenient, but I had rather suffer the inconvenience a considerable time than have you changed.³

The Expedition was now definitely destined to start, and General Wellesley was given the command of a division. He sailed from Sheerness in the *Prometheus*, taking Colin Campbell with him as his Brigade Major.

The Copenhagen expedition, though a necessity, was not one to raise enthusiasm, and those who did not realize the gravity of the situation, openly condemned it.

It was undertaken on account of a secret clause in the Treaty of Tilsit (1807) between France and Russia, which stipulated that the Danish fleet was to be used against England.

England's reply was first to invite Denmark to hand over

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. V, pp. 66-7.*

² *Ibid., pp. 125-6.*

³ *Ibid., p. 126.*

her navy in trust until the declaration of peace, and on her refusal to comply, a force was sent to seize it.*

Arthur Wellesley's attitude towards the affair was one of scrupulous loyalty to the decree of his government, coupled with an honest endeavour to carry out that decree as chivalrously as possible.

His conduct in Denmark was a mixture of military efficiency, and sympathy towards the inhabitants of that country. On August 16th the city of Copenhagen was invested, and it is obvious from his letters that he did not like the idea of bombardment; ". . . I think that it behoves us", he wrote, "to do as little mischief to the town as possible, and to adopt any mode of reducing it, rather than bombardment."¹

This humane policy Arthur Wellesley carried out through his entire military career. "We reflect with no little pleasure", observes Moyle Sherer, "that during the whole of the arduous war conducted by Sir Arthur in the Peninsula, no city was ever laid in ruins by bombardment . . ."²

On August 29th General Wellesley's division defeated the Danish army at Kioge, taking 1,500 prisoners, who were treated with the utmost consideration.

The officers are very desirous to be allowed to go about the country on their parole [General Wellesley petitioned the Commander-in-Chief] and, if your Lordship should have no objection, I think I can make an arrangement with the General which shall relieve them from the inconvenience of confinement, at the same time that we shall not suffer from the indulgence which we may extend to them.³

¹ *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. VI, p. 9.

² *Sherer, Military Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 70.

³ *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. VI, p. 10.

* Commenting on this in *History of the Foreign Policy of Great Britain*, p. 258, Burrows says: "The arguments against the British action towards a Power with which there was no war, assumed as a premiss the independence of the gallant Danes; whereas their independence, like that of Holland, could only be a reality when collective Europe guaranteed it. When the Continent was parcelled out between France and Russia, the Danish fleet belonged to one or other or both of these nations."

This considerate treatment produced a grateful and interesting letter from the Danish General Oxholm.

Penetrated with gratitude [he wrote] for your human and generous conduct towards me and all the officers prisoners, I beg leave here in writing to repeat what my words were unable to express when you left Kioge. I have been at headquarters, and received there from Lord Cathcart an equal noble treatment: my officers were permitted to go home on their parole; the soldiers were sent on board the ships; I could not obtain any indulgence for them, but I have no right to complain, well convinced that, could it have been granted, it would have been done. It is a great pity [*sic*] that political views should counteract the private feelings of the individuals, but, as soldiers, our lot is to obey.¹

But perhaps one of the most engaging letters of gratitude received by General Wellesley during this campaign is one signed "Tonnejen", in which the warmth of sentiment predominates over the writer's knowledge of the English language.

It is an obligation to me [writes this grateful gentleman] to thank you most sincerely and of my heart for the protection you have given me in these days your troops have laid in my neighbourhood. I can never forget it; I shall still remember it; and I beg you most humbly that you never will withdraw me this protection so long your troops are staying here; it will still be a comfort to me and family in letting us live in rest and security.

I cannot finish this without giving the best testimony to that people you have given me to guard. They have always behaved them as people belonging to a great and generous nation.²

By the first week in September the whole affair was over, and into Arthur Wellesley's honest hands was given the arrangement of the treaty of capitulation.

I have only to observe upon this instrument [he writes the Secretary of State for War] that it contains the absolute and unconditional cession of the fleet and naval stores, and gives us the possession of those military points which are necessary in order to enable us to equip and carry away

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 12.*

² *Ibid., p. 18.*

the vessels. This was all that we wanted ; and in everything else I did all in my power to conciliate the Danes.¹

Sir Arthur arrived in London on September 30th, and the early part of October finds him once more installed in Dublin Castle, where, Sir J. Barrington records, "he recommended his duty of secretary ; and during his residence in Ireland in that capacity I did not hear one complaint against any part of his conduct either as a public or private man".²

The Irish Secretary now remained for three months in Ireland, before flitting once more to London for his Parliamentary duties. Just before he went Kitty presented him with another son, born on January 16th, 1808.*

By January 22nd he was in London, with his nose well down to the grindstone, and in for a strenuous session.

About this time events were occurring in Spain and Portugal which were to have a vital effect on Arthur Wellesley's life. For the patriots of these countries had appealed to England for help to resist Napoleon's invasion, and a British expeditionary force was to be sent to their assistance.

The government have lately been talking to me about taking the command of the corps destined for Spain, which is to be assembled at Cork [wrote Arthur to the Duke of Richmond on June 4th] but nothing is yet settled about it. I am convinced that I need make no apology to you for taking it, for if you were in my situation you would do the same ; nor need I say much to produce a conviction upon your mind that if this service should separate me from you, it will be a source of the greatest regret to me. . . . Don't mention this subject, as I don't write it to Lady W. till it will be positively determined.³

There was, however, no doubt about it and the command of the forces going to the Peninsula was definitely given to Sir Arthur Wellesley.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 21.*

² *Barrington, p. 204.*

³ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. V, p. 444.*

* Lord Charles Wellesley, General, 1808-58. Grandfather to the present Duke of Wellington [1936].

It rather looks, too, as if Kitty had quickly got wind of it, and come over to London so as not to miss any precious days, for, according to Croker she was with her husband on June 14th.

Dined early with Sir Arthur and Lady Wellesley in Harley St. . . . [Croker records] in order to talk over some of the Irish business which he had requested me to do for him in the House of Commons . . . After dinner we were alone and talked over our business. There was one point of the Dublin Pipe Water Bill on which I differed a little from him, but could not convince him. At last I said, perhaps he would consider the subject and write to me from Dublin about it. He said, in his quick way, "No, no, I shall be no wiser tomorrow than I am today. I have given you my reasons: you must decide for yourself." When this was over . . . he seemed to lapse into a kind of reverie, and remained silent so long that I asked him what he was thinking of. He replied, "Why, to say the truth, I am thinking of the French that I am going to fight. I have not seen them since the campaign in Flanders, when they were capital soldiers, and a dozen years of victory under Buonaparte must have made them better still. They had besides, it seems, a new system of strategy, which has out-manceuvred and overwhelmed all the armies of Europe. 'Tis enough to make one thoughtful, but no matter: my die is cast, they may overwhelm me, but I don't think they will out-manceuvre me. First, because I am not afraid of them, as everybody else seems to be; and secondly, because if what I hear of their system of manœuvres be true, I think it is a false one as against steady troops. I suspect all the continental armies were more than half beaten before the battle was begun. I, at least, will not be frightened beforehand."¹

By June 20th Arthur was back in Ireland again and busy winding up affairs before his departure.

We also get a glimpse of him at a farewell party given in his honour by Sir J. Barrington, where apparently he was in great form.

I never saw him more cheerful or happy [records his host]. The bombardment of Copenhagen being by chance started as a topic of remark I did not join in its praise, but, on the other hand, muttered that I never did nor should approve it.

¹ *Croker Papers, Vol. I, p. 11.*

“ Damn it, Barrington,” said Sir Arthur, “ why? what do you mean to say? ” “ I say, Sir Arthur,” replied I, “ that it was the very best devised, the very best executed, and the most just and necessary ‘ robbery and murder ’ now on record ! ”

He laughed and adjourned to the drawing-room, where Lady Barrington had a ball and supper as a *finish* for the departing hero.¹

¹ *Barrington*, p. 204.

THE PENINSULAR WAR

THE Peninsular War, which lasted from 1808 till 1814, was fought by the British, Spanish, and Portuguese against Napoleon's troops in Spain and Portugal.

The War, which was a perpetual running sore to the power of Napoleon, was perhaps the most potent factor in the realization of that peace for which the nations longed. For the first time Napoleon had met someone who did not go down before his armies. Up till now he had swept Europe, and no one could stay his triumphal progress. But for six years in the Peninsula,* Wellington stood up to, harassed, and finally conquered the hitherto unconquerable, driving the matchless soldiers of France out of Spain and Portugal, and over the Pyrenees back to their own country again. Even the disaster of Moscow in 1812 would have been powerless to cripple Napoleon permanently had his strength not been sapped by the continual drain of the Peninsular War.

The situation of affairs in Spain and Portugal at the time of the War was as follows :

Portugal, an ally of Britain, was ruled by the Prince Regent, John of Braganza, whose policy was anti-French.

Spain, an ally of France, was ruled by Charles IV of the House of Bourbon ; he and his queen, Maria Luisa, being in turn ruled by the court favourite Godoy,† whose sympathies were eminently French.

In 1807 Napoleon entered into treaty with Spain (the Treaty of Fontainbleau) to divide up Portugal into three provinces, one of which was to form a principality for Godoy.

* Spain and Portugal were known as the Peninsula owing to their geographical formation.

† Godoy, Manuel de Duque de Alcudia and Prince of the Peace.

The Peninsular War

On pretext of invading Portugal, French troops were passed through and into Spain, care being taken to place them in advantageous positions and even to insert them into the most important forts.

By November 27th (1807) the French armies had flowed into Portugal and occupied Abrantes ; whereupon the Prince Regent, deeming discretion to be the better part of valour, placed the government of the country in the hands of a Council of Regency, and removed himself and his court to his dominions in Brazil.

He escaped in the nick of time, sailing from Lisbon just as the French under Junot entered it, and without the smallest disturbance occupied the city. Portugal was now in the hands of the French. The first game was to Napoleon.

Events were now happening in Spain which were shortly to give him the 'rubber'.

The Spanish royal house was divided against itself and split up into rival factions ; the faction of the King and Queen and Godoy, and the faction of Prince Ferdinand, the heir apparent. The latter, who hated Godoy, and had a strong party to support him, caused the royal favourite to be thrown into a dungeon ; after which he forced the King to abdicate, and placed himself upon the throne.

The dethroned Monarch now appealed to Napoleon for support, who on pretext of discussing the situation by personal interview, at Bayonne, lured both parties, usurper and usurped, out of Spain and into France where they fell into a pretty little trap.

The rest was easy ; with Spain full of French armies, Napoleon had only to follow his fancy, which was to remove the crown from Bourbon brows, and place it upon the head of his brother, Joseph Bonaparte ; the Spanish Royal Family being kept in safe custody in France.

These doings, however, did not meet with the approval of the people of Spain, who now awoke to the fact that they had been betrayed and their country given up to the foreigner.

A wild patriotism leaped into flame, and with all the passionate ardour of their race, they turned upon the intruders. The infection spread to Portugal, and soon the Peninsula became the centre of a European war.

Neither Spain nor Portugal, however, was in a position to wage war against France unaided. They therefore turned to England for help, which was speedily forthcoming, for the cause of the Peninsular patriots was popular with the English people. Money and stores were poured freely, if somewhat indiscriminately, into the Peninsula, and in July of 1808 an expeditionary force under Sir Arthur Wellesley was sent to Portugal.

The War lasted until 1814, and was conducted with the utmost courtesy between the French and English, but with horrible ferocity between the French, Portuguese and Spanish.

The history of the Peninsular War is not so much the history of military triumphs as the story of a moral struggle over almost insuperable difficulties. It is the story of a man with his back against the wall ; a man with bound hands and shackled feet, and bearing on his shoulders a load that almost bears him to the ground. A man who staggers ever forward, who falls, yet rises again, and never looks behind.

In the light of victory, one is apt to forget the darkness which precedes it, and in thinking of the triumphs of the Peninsula we forget those years of bitter struggle which made them possible.

In order to get a true perspective we must put back the clock, and look at Arthur Wellesley as he was then, not in that unassailable position to which he afterwards attained, not as an acknowledged conqueror possessing in full the confidence of his country and the world at large ; but as a general on trial, trusted only up to a point by the government who employed him, and viewed with hostility and suspicion by those who grudged so young a general the Peninsular Command. In the eyes of the world he was but a Sepoy General.

The Peninsular War

whose victories in far-off India made little impression on Europe. He had still to prove himself before the world at large. There was only one person who completely trusted him, and that was himself, for he felt surging up within him, that great power which knows not defeat, but rolls ever onward like a mighty torrent carrying away doubts and difficulties in the irresistible flood of its swirling waters.

Well was it for the peace of the world that he felt this power ; for a weaker man would have gone down before the obstacles which lay across his path. Besides the material difficulties which enveloped him, he was shackled by his own code of honour. He must wage war humanely and honestly, paying his way as he went, taking nothing by extortion, no easy matter on an often empty purse. He must conduct the brutal business as mercifully as possible, protecting the non-combatant population ; and punishing with the utmost severity all acts of cruelty and oppression.

It is of these shackles which bound him, and the load under which he struggled forward that the following pages treat.

Chapter Eight

CONVENTION OF CINTRA

ROLICA

VIMEIRO

THE CITY OF LISBON AND CONVENTION OF CINTRA

This is the City of Lisbon.

This is the gold that lay in the City of Lisbon.

These are the French which took the gold that lay in the City of Lisbon.

This is Sir Arthur (whose valour and skill
Began so well but ended so ill)
Who beat the French, who took the gold
That lay in the City of Lisbon.

This is Sir Hew, whom nobody knew,
Who made the Convention that nobody owns
That saved old Junot's baggage and bones,
Altho' Sir Arthur (whose valour and skill
Began so well but ended so ill)
Had beat the French who took the gold
That lay in the City of Lisbon.

These are the ships that conveyed the spoil
That the French had plundered with so much toil
Because Sir Hew, whom nobody knew,
Had made the Convention that nobody owns
That saved old Junot's baggage and bones,
Altho' Sir Arthur (whose valour and skill
Began so well but ended so ill)
Had beat the French who took the gold
That lay in the City of Lisbon.

This is John Bull in great dismay
 At the sight of the ships that conveyed away
 The gold and silver, and all the spoil
 That the French had plundered with so much toil,
 Because Sir Hew, whom nobody knew,
 Had made the Convention that nobody owns
 That saved old Junot's baggage and bones,
 Altho' Sir Arthur (whose valour and skill
 Began so well and ended so ill)
 Had beat the French who took the gold,
 That lay in the City of Lisbon.*

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY† sailed from Cork with his force of 9,000 on July 12th. By July 21st he was at Coruña, by July 25th off Oporto, and on July 31st from Mondego Bay he was issuing his G.O. to the troops concerning their behaviour in Portugal.

The troops are to understand that Portugal is a country friendly to His Majesty [the order ran], that it is essentially necessary to their own success that the most strict obedience should be preserved, that properties and persons should be respected, and that no injury should be done which it is possible to avoid. The Lieutenant-General declares his determination to punish in the most exemplary manner all who may be convicted of acts of outrage and of plunder against the persons or property of any of the people of the country.

It is almost essential to the success of the army that the religious prejudices and opinions of the people of the country should be respected, and with this view the Lieutenant-General desires the following rules may be observed :

- 1st. "No officer or soldier belonging to the army is to go to any place of religious worship, during the performance of Divine service in such places, excepting with the permission of the officer commanding his regiment, and the General officer commanding the brigade to which he belongs.
- 2nd. When an officer or soldier shall visit a church, or any other place of religious worship, from motives of curiosity, at periods

* This rhyme comes from the correspondence of the 1st Earl of Malmesbury, Vol. II, p. 230. It was sent home from the Peninsula by Captain Bowles, who says, "I enclose a squib."

† Promoted to Lieutenant-General, April 25th, 1808.

when Divine service is not performed, he is to remain uncovered while in the church.

3rd. When the Host passes in the streets, officers and soldiers, not on duty, are to halt and front it; the officers to pull off their hats, and the soldiers to put their hands to their caps. When it shall pass a guard, the guard will turn out and present arms; when a sentry, the sentry must present arms.”¹

This was quite in the old style, and betokened that same understanding tolerance which had characterized General Wellesley’s Indian Service. It augured well for his present command.

Shadows of supersession, however, were once more creeping across his horizon. He had been chosen for the command by Lord Castlereagh on account of his fitness for this important service, but the selection did not give satisfaction at Army Headquarters, for “the authorities in the Horse Guards,* wedded to the system of seniority, and pressed by political or family interest at home, objected to so young an officer being put at the head of the whole army. . . .”²

More troops were to be sent to Portugal to augment the Expeditionary Force, and the whole was then to be placed under General Sir Hew Dalrymple, an officer greatly senior to Arthur Wellesley, with Sir Harry Burrard as Second-in-Command.

It was a little disappointing, but there was no help for it. General Wellesley quite realized the situation and wrote reassuringly to Lord Castlereagh.

All that I can say upon that subject is [said he] that whether I am to command the army or not, or am to quit it, I shall do my best to insure its success; and you may depend upon it that I shall not hurry the

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, pp. 91, 92.*

² *Alison, Vol. I, p. 250.*

* The War Office at this period was generally referred to as the Horse Guards as it was housed in the Horse Guards’ Building, Whitehall. In 1906 the War Office was moved to its present buildings in Whitehall, opposite the Horse Guards.

operations, or commence them one moment sooner than they ought to be commenced, in order that I may acquire the credit of the success.¹

It was all, however, upon the lap of the gods, whether or no he would get the chance required to establish his military reputation in the eyes of Europe, and justify his friend Castle-reagh's confidence in him; or whether he would have to be content to carry out the orders of those inferior to him in military capacity, and remain in a more or less subordinate position.

So much hung upon this opportunity, so much more than his own personal fame, more even than the peace of Europe at that particular time; for its effects were to reach out into the distant future, laying the trail for Universal Peace. The opportunity that was then coming to Arthur Wellesley was the opportunity of focusing the attention of the world upon him. He was, through its instrumentality, to arrive at the summit of military fame which the world still worshipped, and in this manner that great principle of selfless service which he inculcated, and by which alone peace can be realized and maintained, was brought forcibly to light. It was only a means to an end, his military fame—the weapon put into the hands of the servant of peace.

And seemingly it all hung upon a matter of time. Would he beat Junot before his superiors arrived?

But his luck held good, and on August 22nd he was writing in high spirits to the Duke of Richmond that "Sir H. Burrard came here on the night of the 20th, but did not land, and, as I am the most fortunate of men, Junot* attacked us yesterday morning with his whole force, and we completely defeated him."²

This was the Battle of Vimeiro on the 21st, and four days

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. IV, p. 43.

² *Supp. Dispatches*, Vol. VI, p. 122.

* Junot, Duc d' Abrantes (Empire title). The French General commanding the French forces in Portugal at that time.

earlier, on the 17th, there had been a smaller action at Rolica in which the British were likewise victors.

On August 15th there had also been a little affair of outposts at Obidos. In this action Kitty's brother,* Captain Pakenham of the 95th, was slightly wounded, and in his letters home Arthur was most careful to guard his wife from being unnecessarily alarmed.

I have written to Longford † [he informed the Duke of Richmond] to desire him to apprise . . . his family of his brother's wound; but if he should be out of the way, and you should have reason to believe that Lady Wellesley will hear of it before she will see Longford, give her the enclosed letter.¹

But it was not so much upon her brother as upon her splendid husband, that Kitty's thoughts and fears were centred. A good many fears, too, there must of necessity have been, in spite of her resolution to keep them down. A little of what she was feeling peeps out in a letter to the great Richard, in which her anxiety gets the better of her punctuation.

I am more obliged to you [she writes] than I can possibly express for your kindness in giving me authentic information from abroad, even the *Hopes* with which the Newspapers are filled are too agitating not to give great uneasiness but I am a Soldiers Wife and the husband of whom it is the pride of my life to think shall find that he has no reason to be ashamed of me. all promises well, the Cause is a glorious one, and Please God we shall see our friends return safe and successful. My Boys are well and lovely.²

But the anxiety for the moment was now ended and all England was ringing with the news of Sir Arthur's two great victories. Congratulations poured in from all quarters. Castlereagh whose choice of General was vindicated, wrote in great exaltation :

You will easily believe that few events in my life—indeed, I may say

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 226.*

² *British Museum Add. MS. 37315, folio 54.*

* Pakenham, Sir Hercules Robert, 1781–1850, son of Edward Michael Pakenham, 2nd Baron Longford.

† Lady Wellesley's eldest brother, Thomas Pakenham, Earl of Longford.

none—have ever given me more gratification than the intelligence of your two splendid victories, to which I hardly know how to give the preference. . . . There was something whimsically providential in the enemy forcing upon you, at the very moment the command was passing—indeed, had formally passed into other hands—the glory of an achievement which your personal moderation and sense of duty had induced you not to invite by any extraordinary acceleration of your operations.¹

It is not possible [wrote the Duke of Richmond] for anything to have been better managed than the whole of your glorious campaign. . . . You are certainly a lucky fellow in having the whole of the honour, which you well deserve, but which a few hours would have robbed you of. We are lucky, too, that you did command, for nobody could have done better . . . Lady Wellesley is quite well, and highly delighted, as you may suppose. Louisa and Charlotte* say, as you have killed all the French, you must now come back.²

. . . Thomas has just run breathless from the village with a paper belonging to the Sun [writes Lady Bessborough† from Inverary] which gives an account of Sir A. W's Victory. I cannot tell you how delighted I am . . . we shall no more be told, I hope, that whatever we may do by sea our land troops are inferior to every other Nation; that we are always worsted, and that it is ridiculous for us to attempt to cope with ye French . . . How I should like to be near some of the croakers, just to hear what they say . . .³

But one of the proudest women in England was Arthur's mother, and she wrote to Richard to share her joy: "I must congratulate you upon the glorious success of our beloved hero; God bless him—He never fails to do what is expected of him."⁴

For nothing was too good for Arthur now, who had been

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 125.* ² *Ibid., Vol. V, p. 476.*

³ *Leveson Gower, Vol. II, p. 327.*

⁴ *British Museum Add. MS. 37315, folio 56.*

* Children of the Duke of Richmond.

† Henrietta Frances, 1761–1821, daughter of John, 1st Earl Spencer, and sister of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire. In 1780 she married Viscount Duncannon, who succeeded his father as Earl of Bessborough in 1793. Lady Bessborough was a great friend of Lord Granville Leveson Gower, and corresponded regularly with him for many years.

steadily gaining the ascendant in Lady Mornington's affections for some years past. But the love and pride she now lavished upon him came too late to make the perfect bond that might so easily have existed between this mother and son, had she loved her ugly duckling as much as she loved the resplendent swan. The swan could never quite forget the sore places over which he had had to grow his beautiful feathers and sometimes felt their hurts.

Arthur's experience as a popular hero, however, was at this time to be of short duration, and soon the fickle mob that shouted itself hoarse over his victories was to be heaping execrations upon him, and treating him as something very near a traitor.

That stepping-stone which led him to the pinnacle of his military fame was a slippery one, and gave under him even as he set his foot upon it ; it was only his own uprightness that kept his balance, and saved him from falling into the raging torrent of public obloquy.

To start off with he was robbed of the fruits of the victory of Vimeiro by Sir Harry Burrard, who arrived on the field towards the end of the action, and though he left matters in Sir Arthur's hands until the battle was won, he afterwards forbade the pursuit of the enemy and thus destroyed the efficacy of the victory. ". . . If I had not been prevented," wrote General Wellesley, "I should have pursued the enemy to Torres Vedras on that evening, and, in all probability, the whole would have been destroyed."¹

This order of Sir Harry Burrard's was the beginning of the trouble which ensued, indeed, it was the crux of the whole matter, for it gave the French time to pull themselves together and retire upon a strong position. When, therefore, on the evening of August 22nd the French General Kellermann * arrived at the British Headquarters, with a proposition

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. IV, p. 204.*

* Afterwards Marshal. Kellermann, François Christophe, Duc de Valmy (Empire title), 1735-1820.

to suspend hostilities preliminary to the evacuation of Portugal by the French, it would have been very unwise under the circumstances to have turned it down. For as Arthur Wellesley afterwards observed :

Although I am decidedly of opinion that the most decisive consequences would have resulted from . . . the pursuit of the enemy on the 21st of August after the battle, yet it does not follow that the measure of allowing the French to evacuate Portugal was not right on the evening of the 22nd.¹

An agreement for the suspension of hostilities was therefore entered into, and at the request of Sir Hew Dalrymple—who had arrived on the morning of the 22nd—Arthur Wellesley's signature was affixed thereto, a fact which, however, by no means betokened his approval of the document: “ . . . *Dowager Dalrymple* and *Betty Burrard* are haggling with Kellerman on inadmissible terms ”,² he wrote in disgust to the Duke of Richmond during the course of the proceedings ; and when they were ended he expressed his decided disapproval to Lord Castlereagh.

Although [he wrote] my name is affixed to this instrument, I beg you will not believe that I negotiated it, that I approve of it, or that I had any hand in wording it . . . I object to its verbiage ; I object to an indefinite suspension of hostilities ; it ought to have been for forty-eight hours only. As it is now, the French will have forty-eight hours to prepare for their defence, after Sir Hew will put an end to the suspension.³

It is important to remember that Sir Arthur Wellesley only signed the agreement to the suspension of hostilities, and not the Convention of Cintra which followed it, and roused the British public to such indignation and fury. The Convention of Cintra which allowed the French to evacuate Portugal with the honours of war and with their arms and baggage,

¹ *Despatches*, Vol. IV, p. 228.

² *Leveson Gower*, Vol. II, p. 330.

³ *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. VI, pp. 122, 123.

as signed on August 30th, eight days after the Agreement for Suspension of Hostilities, and was not even seen by Sir Arthur.

General Wellesley's position at this period was not an enviable one and he was by no means satisfied with the way things were going.

Whether he was satisfied or not, however, was of little moment, for he was only under-dog now. He could have been quite a happy and a useful under-dog, and would have barked and carried most willingly for his superiors had he been allowed. There seems, however, to have been from the start a lack of those friendly relations which had hitherto existed between Arthur and his superior officers.

One must, at the same time, realize the difficulty of Sir Hew Dalrymple's position. He arrived to take over the command from an officer who was "perfectly adored by the troops" ¹ whom he had just led to victory. He must, too, have known that Sir Arthur had the confidence of the Government, and that Lord Castlereagh would much prefer to have continued in command.

Whatever Sir Hew's feelings were, they did not make for harmony between himself and the younger general.

I will not conceal from you [wrote Arthur Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh] . . . that my situation in this army is a very delicate one. I never saw Sir Hew Dalrymple till yesterday; and it is not a very easy task to advise any man on the first day one meets with him. He must at least be prepared to receive advice. Then I have been successful in the army, and they don't appear to me to like to go to anybody else for orders or instructions upon any subject. This is another awkward circumstance which cannot end well; and to tell you the truth, I should prefer going home to staying here. However, if you wish me to stay, I will . . . ²

He was worrying, too, about having signed the armistice without approving of all its terms; though he had as yet not the faintest notion of the *hornet's nest* that this action was eventually to let loose upon him.

¹ *Malmesbury*, Vol. II, p. 77. ² *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. VI, p. 123.

I have only to regret [he wrote the Duke of Richmond] that I signed the agreement for the suspension of hostilities without having negotiated . . . I doubt whether good nature, and a deference to the opinion of an officer appointed Commander-in-Chief . . . and a desire to avoid being considered the head of a party against his authority, will be deemed sufficient excuses for an act which, on other grounds, I cannot justify. I have had nothing to do, however, with any subsequent transaction, excepting to advise stronger measures, and that the Commander-in-Chief should insist on better terms.

I am sick of all that is going on here, and I heartily wish I had never come away from Ireland, and that I was back again with you.¹

His good friend wrote soothingly in reply :

When I saw your name to the agreement to suspend hostilities, I felt certain of the motives which induced you so to do.

I think it is unlucky ; but you acted on the most honourable principles, and your character stands too high for you to mind the blackguard attacks of Cobbett or the whispers of those who dislike the name of Wellesley, or are jealous of your exploits . . . I cannot agree in wishing you had not left Ireland. Had you not gone to Portugal, it would have still been probably in the hands of the French. I, however, agree most heartily in the other wish, namely that you were back again here. When do you think you will be able to come ?

All in this country but the rebels are anxious for your return . . .²

But he was already at home when this letter reached him, though his homecoming was anything but pleasant. Instead of being acclaimed as a conquering hero, he was treated as a traitor, for the British public were dissatisfied with the treaty entered into by the French and English after the Battle of Vimeiro, and though it had nothing whatever to do with Sir Arthur Wellesley, he was nevertheless bracketed with Sir Hew Dalrymple and Sir Harry Burrard, the makers of the treaty, and as such became a subject of public hostility :

. . . I don't know whether I am to be hanged, drawn and quartered, or roasted alive [he wrote his brother Richard on arrival in England]. However, I shall not allow the whole of London to deprive me of my temper or my spirits, or of the satisfaction I feel in the consciousness that I acted right.³

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, pp. 132, 133.*

² *Ibid., p. 133.*

³ *British Museum Add. MS. 37415, folio 47.*

was signed on August 30th, eight days after the Agreement for Suspension of Hostilities, and was not even seen by Sir Arthur.

General Wellesley's position at this period was not an enviable one and he was by no means satisfied with the way things were going.

Whether he was satisfied or not, however, was of little moment, for he was only under-dog now. He could have been quite a happy and a useful under-dog, and would have fetched and carried most willingly for his superiors had he been allowed. There seems, however, to have been from the start a lack of those friendly relations which had hitherto existed between Arthur and his superior officers.

One must, at the same time, realize the difficulty of Sir Hew Dalrymple's position. He arrived to take over the command from an officer who was "perfectly adored by the troops"¹ whom he had just led to victory. He must, too, have known that Sir Arthur had the confidence of the Government, and that Lord Castlereagh would much prefer to have continued him in command.

Whatever Sir Hew's feelings were, they did not make for harmony between himself and the younger general.

I will not conceal from you [wrote Arthur Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh] . . . that my situation in this army is a very delicate one. I never saw Sir Hew Dalrymple till yesterday; and it is not a very easy task to advise any man on the first day one meets with him. He must at least be prepared to receive advice. Then I have been successful with the army, and they don't appear to me to like to go to anybody else for orders or instructions upon any subject. This is another awkward circumstance which cannot end well; and to tell you the truth, I should prefer going home to staying here. However, if you wish me to stay, I will . . .²

He was worrying, too, about having signed the armistice without approving of all its terms; though he had as yet not the faintest notion of the *horne's nest* that this action was eventually to let loose upon him.

¹ *Malmesbury*, Vol. II, p. 77. ² *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. VI, p. 122.

I have only to regret [he wrote the Duke of Richmond] that I signed the agreement for the suspension of hostilities without having negotiated . . . I doubt whether good nature, and a deference to the opinion of an officer appointed Commander-in-Chief . . . and a desire to avoid being considered the head of a party against his authority, will be deemed sufficient excuses for an act which, on other grounds, I cannot justify. I have had nothing to do, however, with any subsequent transaction, excepting to advise stronger measures, and that the Commander-in-Chief should insist on better terms.

I am sick of all that is going on here, and I heartily wish I had never come away from Ireland, and that I was back again with you.¹

His good friend wrote soothingly in reply :

When I saw your name to the agreement to suspend hostilities, I felt certain of the motives which induced you so to do.

I think it is unlucky ; but you acted on the most honourable principles, and your character stands too high for you to mind the blackguard attacks of Cobbett or the whispers of those who dislike the name of Wellesley, or are jealous of your exploits . . . I cannot agree in wishing you had not left Ireland. Had you not gone to Portugal, it would have still been probably in the hands of the French. I, however, agree most heartily in the other wish, namely that you were back again here. When do you think you will be able to come ?

All in this country but the rebels are anxious for your return . . .²

But he was already at home when this letter reached him, though his homecoming was anything but pleasant. Instead of being acclaimed as a conquering hero, he was treated as a traitor, for the British public were dissatisfied with the treaty entered into by the French and English after the Battle of Vimeiro, and though it had nothing whatever to do with Sir Arthur Wellesley, he was nevertheless bracketed with Sir Hew Dalrymple and Sir Harry Burrard, the makers of the treaty, and as such became a subject of public hostility :

. . . I don't know whether I am to be hanged, drawn and quartered, or roasted alive [he wrote his brother Richard on arrival in England]. However, I shall not allow the whole of London to deprive me of my temper or my spirits, or of the satisfaction I feel in the consciousness that I acted right.³

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, pp. 132, 133.*

² *Ibid., p. 133.*

³ *British Museum Add. MS. 37425, folio 47.*

Apparently, too, he was as good as his word, for a day or two later his mother writes :

Thank God, I have seen dear Arthur in good looks and health, and am more delighted than I can express at his conduct and high spirit in leaving those persons to their own intentions who have so basely injured him, and thwarted all his glorious enterprises for the welfare of his country. I trust they will ere long be confounded and punished as they deserve, for the disgrace they have brought upon dear old England.¹

In spite, however, of the brave face Arthur showed before the world, there were moments, especially at first, when he must have felt acutely the injustice of his situation ; and someone who saw him at Plymouth on landing found him "low and nervous".²

But he soon righted himself, and his great mind soaring above the attacks of little men, he took refuge in a dignified silence. "I have not read one word that has been written on either side," he told the Duke of Richmond, "and I have refused to publish, and don't mean to authorize the publication of a single line in my defence."³

The storm of public animosity hissed and bubbled around Arthur's devoted head, and the opposition, in the seventh heaven, jibbered with ecstasy. "I grieve for the opportunity that has been lost of acquiring national glory," Creevey *

¹ *British Museum Add. MS. 37426, folio 100.*

² *Leveson Gower, Vol. I, p. 339.*

³ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 151.*

* Creevey, Thomas, 1768-1838. Secretary to Board of Control in "All the Talents Ministry", 1806-7, one of the barking dogs of the Whig party. Rather an amazing person, since, without birth or fortune or any of the apparent qualifications necessary to effect an entry into the society of that period, he was yet welcomed in the most exclusive circles. His ability as a *raconteur* of scandal may have had a great deal to do with his social success, but there was probably something better than this, or he would not have had so many friends. In spite of his shrieking Whigism, he was in the end honest enough publicly to change his mind concerning Arthur Wellesley, and from having consistently *vilified him*, became eventually one of his ardent admirers.

wrote, when news of the Convention of Cintra first reached England, "but am not sorry to see the Wellesley pride a little lowered . . ."¹ And as hostility towards the Victor of Vimeiro increased, Creevey's joy grew with it.

Now [he exulted] we have the rascals upon the hip. It is evident that *he* [Arthur Wellesley] was the prime cause—the *only* cause—of all the mischief, and that from the motive of thwarting everything *after he was superseded*. Thus do we pay for the arrogance of that damned infernal family.²

The above being only Creevey, and opposition cackle, was perhaps not too serious a matter; but at a ball in Carlisle, "when the steward . . . gave the health of Sir Arthur Wellesley, an officer rose and declared that he would not drink the health of a General who had disgraced England".³

Even the Government were inclined to give me up [declared the 'victim' in after years]. When I came back, the old King * was to have one of his weekly levées; I asked Lord Castlereagh to carry me "as I must present myself on my return from abroad" and happened to have no carriage in town. Castlereagh hemmed and hawed, and said that there was so much ill-humour in the public mind that it might produce inconvenience, and, in short, he advised me not to go to the levée. I said, "When I first mentioned it, I only thought it a matter of respect and duty to the King; I now look upon it as a matter of self-respect and duty to my own character, and I therefore insist on knowing whether this advice proceeds in any degree from His Majesty, and I wish you distinctly to understand that I will go to the levée tomorrow, or I never will go to a levée in my life." Castlereagh immediately withdrew all opposition. I went, and was exceedingly well received by His Majesty.⁴

It was at this levée that Arthur had the somewhat unusual experience of seeing a deputation from the City of London present an address to the King petitioning that he should be brought to trial. The deputation appear to have been somewhat disconcerted at finding the 'criminal' received at Court,

¹ *Creevey Papers*, Vol. I, p. 89.

² *Ibid.*, p. 90.

³ *Lady Stanhope's Letter Bag*, Vol. I, p. 164.

⁴ *Croker Papers*, Vol. I, pp. 317-18.

* George III.

and, "after their address was presented, came up with fawning civility and expressed anxious wishes for his good health".¹

Arthur's troubles, however, were not borne in loneliness, for he was rich in the love and affection of his friends, and these now rallied round him, and from all sides came letters of sympathy and offers of support:

... I do desire very distinctly ... to be considered the warmest as I am the oldest of your friends [wrote the Marquess of Buckingham], and to be made useful to you in any way that you may point out as likely to assist you ... your situation is very difficult, and I should deceive you if I did not add that the whole of your future public life of fame and honour must depend upon the impressions which the public will entertain on this subject. I again repeat that I have not a doubt upon your conduct, and that I burn with the impatience of leading the public to think of one whom I so affectionately love with the same partiality as I do.²

Arthur's military troubles did not make him forget that he was still Secretary for Ireland, and leaving the shrieking world of England to its own devices he ran over to attend to business in Dublin, and by October 20th was once more addressing his letters from Dublin Castle.

Here he remained for close upon three weeks, banishing Portuguese affairs as far as might be from his mind, and showing a philosophic spirit to the outside world. Indeed, it is possible that the control in which he held his emotions enabled him to become really impervious to the unpleasant situation in which he found himself.

... Notwithstanding the calumny and abuse of which I am the object [he wrote General Spencer *], for measures not my own, and against which I gave my opinion, I have neither lost my temper nor my spirits; and I look with pride and satisfaction at the confidence and

¹ *Stanhope*, p. 243.

² *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. VI, p. 149.

* Second-in-Command under Sir Arthur Wellesley in Portugal. General Sir Brent Spencer, 1760-1828.

kindness of yourself and the officers of the army, who, after all, are the best judges of my conduct, and at the affection of my friends.¹

You see what a scrape I am in [he told another friend], but you must be with me to know how little I care about it. I believe that the kindness of the officers stands me in the stead of popular favour and reputation.²

Arthur's philosophic calm was by no means shared by his friends, and applications poured in to him from all sides, begging him to authorize them to make some public statement on his behalf, with a view to showing his real position in the matter. But he would have none of it, and adhered to his resolution to publish nothing and to keep his mouth publicly shut until the Court of Inquiry which had been ordered to investigate the conduct of the three generals concerning the Convention of Cintra, should be assembled.

In respect to the conduct of my case [he wrote the Marquess of Buckingham] I have determined that I will publish nothing, nor will authorize the publication of anything by others. This forbearance is particularly incumbent upon me, as the whole subject must be enquired into. I have also determined that I will not involve others in scrapes because they differed in opinion with me previously to the 22nd of August, notwithstanding that difference of opinion and the alteration of system were the cause of the military expediency of allowing the French to withdraw from Portugal. I am afraid that I shall experience some difficulty in carrying this intention into execution, because the truth must come out; but I will endeavour not to bring others (viz. Sir Harry Burrard) into a scrape, not only out of regard to him, but because I think it fatal to the public service to expose officers to the treatment which I have received, and to punishment for acting upon their own military opinions, which opinions they may fairly entertain.³

Towards Sir Hew Dalrymple Arthur showed a like generosity, and refused to shelter himself behind the fact that it was at Sir Hew's request he signed the agreement for suspension of hostilities.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 167.*

² *Ibid., p. 182.*

³ *Ibid., p. 153.*

I don't think that the expression of this desire could be considered tantamount to an order [he wrote Lord Temple *]. I certainly think that it was so put that I could have declined to comply with it; and here is the great difficulty of my situation. Such is the temper of the times and the violence of the prejudices excited against me upon this subject, that my motives will never be understood, and I shall never have credit for those which really actuated me.

I signed it, notwithstanding my objections to it, because I would not, in the face of the whole army, set myself up in opposition to the Commander of the Forces on the very day he joined his army. His task was sufficiently difficult without adding to it that further difficulty. I agreed with him upon the main point, viz. the evacuation by the French troops. My refusal to sign would not have prevented the execution of the instrument, and would only have tended to raise my character at the expense of others, and probably at that of not a little outrage and want of discipline in the army.¹

Arthur's friends, however, did not agree with this policy of silence:

... You must permit me to doubt the prudence or the fairness to yourself [replied Lord Temple] of abstaining from all complaint and attack against those who prevented you from following up your victory of the 21st ... it cannot escape you that it is the wish, the object, and the interest of some persons ... to lay upon your shoulders what they ought to bear themselves, and this they inevitably will do if you stand aloof and take no step to prevent it by vindicating your own character, even though it may be at the expense of theirs.²

The clan Wellesley were also anxious for Arthur's return, and not without reason, for no sooner had he left London than his brother William † discovered that Sir Hew Dalrymple

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, pp. 257, 258.* ² *Ibid., pp. 163, 164.*

* Richard Temple Nugent Brydges Chandos Grenville, Lord Temple (afterwards 1st Duke of Buckingham and Chandos), 1776-1839. Eldest son of 1st Marquess of Buckingham.

† Wellesley Pole, William (afterwards 3rd Earl of Mornington in the Peerage of Ireland, and 1st Baron Maryborough of United Kingdom), 1763-1845. Second son of Garret, 1st Earl of Mornington. Took additional name of Pole on inheriting the estates of his cousin William Pole of Ballyfin. M.P. for Trim Irish Parliament 1783-90. M.P. for East Looe English Parliament 1790-4. After the Union, became M.P.

intended to put the responsibility of the Convention of Cintra entirely on General Wellesley's shoulders.

Sir Hew [wrote William] makes no scruple of saying, be the Convention bad or be it good, it is no measure of his; that it is all Sir Arthur Wellesley's . . . that the Armistice was negotiated between Sir Arthur and Kellermann; that he scarcely put in a word or made any objection to anything whatever; . . . that Sir Arthur was stated to him to have the full confidence of Ministers, and that he did in everything submit his judgement to his, and was guided by him . . . This being the state of the case [continued Arthur's brother] . . . I am of opinion that you ought not to lose a moment in coming back . . .¹

But Arthur remained immovable and continued his work in Ireland as if no storm was raging across the water.

William, however, was in the thick of it all and realized the danger hanging over his brother's head. On October 27th he wrote again in an endeavour to bring it home to him;

. . . The public [he told the obdurate Arthur] are brought at length to look upon you as responsible for everything that passed in the army in Portugal after your command and consequently your power had entirely ceased, and you are considered as the cause of all that passed after you were superseded. . . . We have entirely lost sight of your campaign and your two battles, and we hear of nothing but the share you took in the Armistice and Convention, and the responsibility attached to you for these measures. . . .²

The Court of Inquiry finally brought Arthur back to London, which he reached on November 9th. It was held in the Great Hall of the Royal College, Chelsea, and commenced on November 14th.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 164.*

² *Ibid., p. 172.*

for Queen's County in 1801, which place he represented for 20 years. In 1803 became clerk of the Ordnance. In 1807 Secretary to the Admiralty. In 1809 Chief Secretary for Ireland (in succession to his brother Arthur). Master of the Mint in 1814. Postmaster-General in Peel's short Ministry, 1834-5. Created Baron Maryborough in 1821. Succeeded to the Earldom of Mornington on the death of his eldest brother in 1842. Married Katherine Elizabeth, daughter and co-heiress of Admiral John Forbes, by whom he had one son and three daughters.

The finding of the Court was not remarkable for its logic, it was in fact ambiguous and non-committal. The three generals got off without any censure, in fact everybody was in the right.

Sir Arthur Wellesley was right for winning his two battles, Sir Harry Burrard was not wrong in preventing him from following up his victory at Vimeiro and finishing off his job. The Convention of Cintra was also right.

The fact was that the Court had no intention of censuring Sir Harry or Sir Hew, and as it was impossible to censure Sir Arthur, every one had to be right, whether logically so, or otherwise.

Arthur himself, as might be expected, was not enthusiastic over the result.

The report of the Court of Inquiry [he wrote his brother Henry] is the most extraordinary document I have ever perused. I say nothing of opinions; for opinions in these days are like colours, matters of taste. But as far as respects me they have not stated even the facts correctly, and they have garbled the whole most terribly.¹

Nevertheless the main point at issue, viz. the necessity for the Convention of Cintra under the circumstances, was definitely proved, and the howling mob was defeated of its prey. Arthur was neither 'hanged, drawn and quartered' nor 'roasted alive'. Instead he returned to Ireland, where he appears to have been in the best of spirits.

"I think", he wrote from thence, "that I am almost out of all my old scrapes, and nearly ready to get into others."²

He managed to keep out of them, however, and his star, which had been hidden by dark clouds, now rose once more triumphantly in the ascendant, and on April 8th a young General, not yet turned forty, set out for Portsmouth from whence he was to sail for Portugal as Commander-in-Chief of the British forces assembled in that country.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. V, p. 526.*

² *Ibid., p. 518.*

And the British public, consistently fickle, sang the following little rhyme :

Sir Arthur and Sir Harry, Sir Harry and Sir Hew,
Doodle, doodle, doodle, cock a doodle do.
Sir Arthur was a gallant Knight, but for the other two,
Doodle, doodle, doodle, cock a doodle do.¹

¹ *Lady Stanhope's Letter Bag, Vol. I, p. 164.*

Chapter Nine

THE PENINSULAR WAR

OPORTO

TALAVERA

Let Gallant Wellesley's praise be sung,
 Whose sword decides their doom,
 His laurels on the Ganges sprung,
 And on the Tagus bloom.*

ARTHUR WELLESLEY sailed from Portsmouth on the frigate *Surveillante*.

One would now suppose him to be safely out of his troubles and heading for a brilliant future.

Life, however, is full of hazards and the sea lay between him and his destination.

The weather had been atrocious, since his arrival at Portsmouth, with contrary winds and heavy gales, and he was forced to hang about for nearly a week before the *Surveillante* could put to sea. When she finally sailed the moment does not appear to have been particularly propitious, for she ran into a severe storm off the Isle of Wight.

It was a very serious affair, so serious that the skipper, Sir George Collier, thought she would founder, and sent to warn those on board that all was over.

Arthur Wellesley lay sleeping in his cabin, oblivious of what was happening in the world of waters outside. He was awakened suddenly from his slumbers by Colin Campbell, who delivered the Captain's message, and begged his Chief to put on his boots and come up on deck. Instead

* Rhyme of the period; from *Wellington Anecdotes*.

of doing so, however, Sir Arthur with the utmost coolness "put his legs out of his cot and sat upright, but said he had better not come on deck, the confusion being so great. He also remarked that he could swim better without his boots, and he very coolly waited for the striking of the ship."^{1*}

But the *Surveillante* thought better of it, righted herself, and carried the young General safely to his field of operations, depositing him at Lisbon on April 22nd, where the inhabitants received him with wild enthusiasm.

No words [says Lord Londonderry †] would be adequate to convey the faintest idea of the delight exhibited by all classes of persons, as soon as the arrival of Sir Arthur Wellesley at Lisbon became known. All day long the streets were crowded with men and women, congratulating one another on the happy event; and at night the city was illuminated, even in the most obscure and meanest of its lanes and alleys. In the theatres, pieces were hastily got up . . . in which Victory was made to crown the representative of the hero with laurels . . .²

This was somewhat in contrast to the reception afforded him a few months previously by his own countrymen. But to the Portuguese he was their deliverer, the hero of Rolica and Vimeiro, for whose return they had anxiously waited. "Nothing can exceed the high idea they have of him, and they are right,"³ wrote one of his officers.

Nevertheless there was just one circumstance which marred the bright prospect opening out for Arthur, and that was the fact that he was superseding an old friend; for Sir John Cradock, who was then in command of the remaining British troops in Portugal, † was to make way for his brilliant junior, and to be given the command in Gibraltar instead.

¹ *Broughton, Vol. III, p. 254.*

² *Londonderry, Vol. I, pp. 303, 304.*

³ *Warre, Peninsular Letters, p. 54.*

* Anecdote told by Sir Colin Campbell to Lord Broughton.

† Then Brigadier-General the Hon. Charles Stewart.

‡ It must not be forgotten that Sir John Moore became Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the Peninsula, when Sir Hew Dalrymple was recalled for the Court of Inquiry concerning the Convention of

It was a curious trick of Fate, that the man who had experienced on two occasions the bitterness of supersession, was in his turn to be the instrument of inflicting it upon another. He did not like the position at all, and during those days of waiting at Portsmouth had done a great deal of thinking upon the subject, finally deciding that in the event of Sir John having been successfully engaged with the enemy before his arrival, he (Sir Arthur) "could not reconcile it to his feelings to supersede him".¹

These generous sentiments he communicated to Castlereagh. "The decision of this delicate question", said he, "must in a great measure rest with me, and I hope that I have fairness and firmness to decide it according to the best of my judgment."²

For he had to look at the matter from two viewpoints, that of consideration for a friend, and that of public duty—and more especially the duty towards that country whose deliverance had been placed in his hands.

But the situation he had most dreaded had to be faced on his arrival, for Sir John had fought no action, showed no intention of moving forward, and prospects in general seemed somewhat stagnant.

... I consider affairs in this country [he wrote Lord Castlereagh] to be exactly in the state in which, if I found them, it was the intention of the King's Ministers that I should assume the command ; and accordingly, I propose to assume it as soon as I shall communicate with Sir John Cradock."³

With the coming of Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley stagnation ceased and things began to move.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 222.*

² *Ibid., p. 224.*

³ *Dispatches, Vol. IV, p. 248.*

Cintra. In the interim, Moore advanced into Spain as far as Toro, but owing to lack of support, was, in December, forced to fall back upon Coruña. This was the beginning of that famous and terrible 250-mile retreat which ended in the Battle of Coruña on January 16, 1809, and the death of Sir John Moore.

His first objective was to push Soult* out of Oporto, and he wasted no time in getting the matter under way.

Remaining but a week at Lisbon, he hurried on to join the army at Coimbra.

Sir Arthur Wellesley was now in supreme military authority as far as Portugal was concerned, for the Portuguese Government had conferred upon him the rank of Marshal-General. He was, therefore, able to go ahead and follow the line his genius indicated.

It led him swiftly forwards, and ten days after having joined his army he had crossed the Douro, fought and won the Battle of Oporto, ejected the French from that city, and at four o'clock on the afternoon of May 12th was sitting down eating the dinner that had been prepared for Marshal Soult, having "completely surprised in his quarters one of the most distinguished French marshals, and consummated in his face the most difficult operation in war—that of crossing a deep and rapid river before an enemy".¹ †

Not a bad effort this, considering it was barely twenty-six days since he had left Portsmouth.

One of the first actions of General Wellesley after his victory was the care of the enemy wounded; for Soult, having beat a very hasty retreat, had left them behind in the town of Oporto. Their fate might have been a sad one had not their vanquisher taken them under his protection, for the Portuguese at that time were much inflamed against the French, and were apt to murder any wounded and stragglers that fell into their hands. Horrible as it sounds, they cannot be altogether blamed, for they were avenging their own countrymen who had suffered greatly at the hands of the invaders.

¹ *Peninsular Sketches, Vol. I, p. 95.*

* Soult, Jean de Dieu, Nicholas, Marshal, 1769-1857.

† The crossing of the River Douro which separated Sir Arthur's position from that of Soult's army in Oporto, was the outstanding characteristic of this battle.

You know that you have left in this town a great many sick and wounded [wrote General Wellesley to Marshal Soult on May 12th] of whom you may be sure I will take the greatest care, and as far as I am able to prevent it, no one shall injure them. . . .¹

On May 25th, a fortnight after the Battle of Oporto, the Tower and Park guns in London boomed out the tidings of Sir Arthur's victory.

After that effort, however, the enthusiasm subsided—if, indeed, it had been felt by anyone besides the guns.

I think that justice has not been done in England [wrote Mr. Villiers, the British Ambassador* in Lisbon, to Sir Arthur Wellesley] either to you or to the service in which you have lately been engaged, and I know how much some people try to underrate and cry down everything, if their attempts are only not resisted and are tolerated in silence.²

I am obliged to you [wrote Sir Arthur in reply] for the trouble you have taken respecting the opinions in England regarding our operations. In the present state of the public mind in England, I believe that it will be very difficult to satisfy people with anything; and the government are so weak, that they are afraid to take the lead and to guide the public opinion upon any subject. However, I am very indifferent what the opinion is of our operations. I shall do the best I can with the force given to me, and if the people of England are not satisfied, they must send somebody else who will do better.

I see [he added] that Mr. Whitbread † accuses me of exaggeration, which is in other words, lying!³

For the opposition were on the war-path again, and a victory from Sir Arthur was the last thing they wanted. The following correspondence arising out of Mr. Whitbread's comments in the House of Commons on General Wellesley's

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. IV, p. 302.

² *Supp. Dispatches*, Vol. VI, p. 293.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

* The Hon. John Charles Villiers, 1757–1838. British Envoy to Portugal 1808–10. Succeeded his brother as 3rd Earl of Clarendon in 1824.

† Whitbread, Samuel, 1758–1815. Politician—a Whig, and a leading spirit in the opposition during the period of the Peninsular War. He inherited the Whitbread brewery.

Oporto Despatches is interesting as indicative of the bitter political animosity of the period, which blinded honest men and warped their capacity for impartial judgment. For Whitbread appears to have been a fine character, and in spite of the political poison, respected Arthur Wellesley as a man, a respect that was of necessity returned, since all good men are comrades at heart, despite the foolish barriers they erect around themselves.

*Lieut.-Gen. Sir Arthur Wellesley to Major-Gen. R. C. Ferguson.**
ABRANTES. 22nd June, 1809.

MY DEAR FERGUSON,

I am in general callous to the observations of party and to the remarks of writers in the newspapers, but I acknowledge that I have been a little disturbed by a statement which it appears was made in the House of Commons by Mr. Whitbread—viz: that I had exaggerated the success of the Army under my command, or, in other words, that I had *lyed*.

I complain that Mr. Whitbread before he made this statement in the House did not read my letter with attention; if he had, he would have seen, first, that we were engaged on the 10th only with cavalry and a small body of infantry, with some guns; secondly, on the 11th, with about 4,000 infantry and some squadrons of cavalry; and on the 12th I stated nothing of numbers, but that the French were under command of Soult.

From the nature of the action it was impossible for me to see the numbers engaged, so as to form an estimate of them in a dispatch; but I saw Soult and knew . . . that he was either wounded or had a fall from his horse; and I saw a very large body of troops march out of Oporto to the attack.

* Sir Ronald Crawford Ferguson, 1773–1841. Commanded the Highland Brigade of 42nd and 78th regiments at Vimeiro. (See *The Creevey Papers*, Vol. I, p. 101, footnote.) Ferguson was a mutual friend of Wellesley and Whitbread.

I have since heard that the whole of the French infantry in Portugal, with the exception of Loison's Corps, which might amount to 4,000 men, were in this attack and . . . estimated to be 10,000 men. We took two pieces more cannon in action than I stated in my dispatch, and I believe the return of cannon which the French were obliged to leave on that day was not less than 50 pieces.

After that, I don't think it quite fair that I should, in my absence, be accused of exaggeration, or, in other words, *lying*.

Believe me,

Yours most sincerely,

ARTHUR WELLESLEY.¹

Major-Gen. R. C. Ferguson to Samuel Whitbread, M.P.

TICK HILL, BANTRY,

21 July 1809.

MY DEAR SIR,

. . . I last night got a letter from Sir Arthur Wellesley and think it best to send you the original without making any comment on it. He is a very fine manly fellow, and I am sure . . . you shd. not mean to say anything personally disrespectful to him. I know that in many points you like him, and I shd. be very sorry that anything shd. occur which shd. remove the mutual good opinion you have of each other. It is one of those things in which no advice can be given, and it must be left entirely to yourself, but I trust you will pardon me if I express a hope that you will either write a few lines to him or to me such as I can send to him which will do away any unpleasant impression that the newspaper reports may have occasioned.

I desire etc:

R. C. FERGUSON.²

¹ *The Creevey Papers, Vol. I, pp. 102, 103.*

² *Ibid., pp. 101, 102.*

Samuel Whitbread, M.P., to Sir Arthur Wellesley.
SOUTHILL, July 30, 1809.

DEAR SIR,

I am very much concern'd to find by a letter I have received from Genl. Ferguson, inclosing one from you to him, that a report in some of the newspapers of what I am supposed to have said in the House of Commons relative to the operations of the army under your command at Oporto has been the cause of any uneasiness to you. You know full well that the newspapers very commonly misrepresent what falls from members of Parliament, and that it is impossible to answer for what is put in by the reporters. In this case I really don't know what I have been made to say, but I can venture to assure you that nothing disrespectful towards yourself ever fell from my mouth, because all the feelings of my mind are of a nature so entirely the reverse. . . . I daresay I did express my opinion that the rejoicings of your friends in power upon the receipt of your Dispatch was greater than the occasion call'd for, in which was not to be included any sentiment derogatory to you. I am sorry that your very important occupations should be interrupted, even for the short time necessary to read this letter, by any circumstance relating to me; but I could not help writing to you, and I must detain you one moment longer to assure you that I wish you all possible success, and that I expect from an army commanded by you every happy result that its strength can possibly effect.

I am, My dear Sir, Your very faithful servant,

S. WHITBREAD.¹

Lieut.-Gen. Sir Arthur Wellesley to Samuel Whitbread, M.P.
BADAJOS, Sept. 4, 1809.

DEAR SIR,

I am very much obliged to you for your letter . . . As I had more than once received from you those marks of your

¹ *The Creevey Papers, Vol. I, pp. 103, 104.*

attention and of your good opinion which you have been pleased to repeat in your letter, and as it indeed appeared by the report of your speech which I read that you had expressed the same sentiments on that occasion, I was anxious to remove from your mind an impression which it appeared had been made upon it, and which must have been injurious to me—that I had made an exaggerated statement of the operations of the troops under my command. In fact, I did not state with what numbers of the enemy the army was engaged when it passed the Douro, as I did not know them when I wrote my despatch ; and that was what I wanted to explain to you.

I will not enter into any statement of our affairs in this part of the world ; I daresay that you will hear and read enough, and speak more upon them than some of us will like . . . It will be satisfactory, however, for you to hear that the French begin to be convinced ‘ que les Français ne seront jamais les maîtres des Anglais.*

Ever, dear Sir,

Yours most faithfully,

ARTHUR WELLESLEY.¹

The letters which passed between Mr. Whitbread and Arthur Wellesley were eventually shown by the former to the arch-gossip Creevey, who commented upon them as follows : “ . . . I hate Wellesley, but there are passages in his letter that made me think better of him. . . . ”²

Oporto now being freed of the invader, General Wellesley’s next objective was to advance into Spain, and about the middle of June he received permission from the British Government to do so.

His progress thither, however, was not as rapid as he could

¹ *The Creevey Papers, Vol. I, pp. 104, 105.*

² *Ibid., p. 109.*

* Translation : “ that the French will never be masters of the English ”.

have wished, for his path was beset with difficulties, the most pressing of these at the commencement, being that perpetual and ever-green worry which was to dog his footsteps throughout the whole of the Peninsular War—lack of money.

I think it proper to draw your Lordship's attention [he wrote to the Secretary of State on June 11th] to the want of money in this army. The troops are nearly two months in arrear, and the army is in debt in Portugal a sum amounting to not less than £200,000.¹

And again ten days or so later he is still lamenting his financial position to Lord Castlereagh. "When I wrote you last", he told him, "I was in hopes that I should have marched before this time, but the money is not yet arrived."²

The money so long overdue appeared at length on June 25th, when the army immediately got into movement and started for Spain.

But as Sir Arthur advanced into that country, another and even more desperate difficulty confronted him, viz. lack of sustenance for his troops; for the Spanish had failed to fulfil their contracts concerning supplies, and afforded no support whatever to the army which had come to their aid. Matters became so desperate that on July 24th General Wellesley halted his army and seriously considered the question of withdrawing from Spain.

... I am concerned to say [he wrote the British Minister] that, although my troops have been on forced marches, engaged in operations with the enemy, the success of which I must say depended upon them, they have had nothing to eat, while the Spanish army have had plenty; notwithstanding that I have returns of engagements made by the alcaldes of villages ... to furnish this army before the 24th of this month with 250,000 rations. . . .

It is ridiculous to pretend that the country cannot supply our wants. The French army is well fed, and the soldiers who are taken in good health, and well supplied with bread, of which indeed they left a small magazine behind them.

This is a rich country in corn, in comparison with Portugal, and yet,

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. IV, p. 386.*

² *Ibid., p. 427.*

during the whole of my operations in that country, we never wanted bread but on one day on the frontiers of Galicia . . .

I am aware of the important consequences which must attend the step which I shall take in withdrawing from Spain . . . But no man can see his army perish by want . . .¹

General Wellesley's army appears to have borne its sufferings for the most part with fortitude and patience ;

. . . an excellent spirit prevailed in the army at this time [says Moyle Sherer] . . . there were no murmurs, no complainings in the ranks ; no doubts as to the final and just settlement of all their claims. The men had a confidence in their commander's honour, a trust in his talents, a belief in his fortune, and an admiration of his courage. Hence they would have endured any hardship, have borne any privation, and have faced any danger, if they only saw Wellesley in the camp.²

Yet this same army which bore real suffering so patiently, had at other times been a source of shame to its Commander by its disorderly behaviour and propensity to plunder.

That it should have misbehaved itself in Spain is not altogether to be wondered at, seeing it was in a state of starvation, but its conduct had been the same in Portugal where the troops wanted for nothing, and were treated with the utmost kindness and hospitality by the inhabitants.

The Commander of the Forces is much concerned to be obliged again to complain of the conduct of the troops [said Sir Arthur in his General Order of May 29th, issued whilst the army was still in Portugal] ; not only have outrages been committed by whole corps, but there is no description of property of which the unfortunate inhabitants of Portugal have not been plundered by the British soldiers whom they have received into their houses, or by stragglers from different regiments of the army. . . .

The people of Portugal deserve well of the army ; they have in every instance treated the soldiers well ; and there never was an army so well supplied, or which had so little excuse for plunder, if any excuse can in any case exist. But if the Commander of the Forces should not by these and other measures be enabled to get the better of these practices, he is determined to report to His Majesty, and send into garrison, those corps who shall continue them ; as he prefers a small but disciplined and well

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. IV, pp. 496, 497.*

² *Sherer, Military Memoirs, Vol. I, p. 224.*

ordered body of troops to a rabble, however numerous; and he is resolved not to be the instrument of inflicting upon the people of this country the miseries which result from the operations of such a body.¹

It is impossible to describe to you [he wrote Lord Castlereagh from Abrantes * on June 17th] the irregularities and outrages committed by the troops. They are never out of the sight of their officers . . . that outrages are not committed; and notwithstanding the pains which I take, of which there will be ample evidence in my orderly books, not a post or a courier comes in, not an officer arrives from the rear of the army, that does not bring me accounts of outrages committed by the soldiers who have been left behind on the march, having been sick, or having straggled from their regiments, or who have been left in hospitals.²

In spite of all difficulties, however, General Wellesley went forward, and on July 22nd his advanced guards met and scrapped with the French outposts.

The Allies had now made junction with the Spanish army and had arrived at Talavera de la Reyna, which on July 28th was to provide Arthur Wellesley with another victory, and the Opposition with another grumble.

The battle, however, should have taken place several days earlier, but for the contrariness of the Spanish Generalissimo Cuesta, a decrepit old gentleman who always wanted to do the opposite to what the English General suggested.

I find General Cuesta more and more impracticable every day [wrote Sir Arthur on July 24th]. It is impossible to do business with him, and very uncertain that any operation will succeed in which he has any concern . . . He has quarrelled with some of his principal officers, and I understand that all are dissatisfied with him, for the manner in which he has conducted his operations near this place.

He contrived to lose the whole of yesterday, in which, although his troops were under arms, and mine in march, we did nothing, owing to the whimsical perverseness of his disposition. . . .³

In the end it was the French who took the offensive, and on July 27th the Battle of Talavera began. It lasted two days.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, pp. 270, 271, 272.*

² *Despatches, Vol. IV, pp. 404, 405.* ³ *Ibid., p. 498.*

* In Portugal.

The result of the first day's fighting was indecisive, and that night both armies lay upon their arms, waiting for the portentous morrow; Sir Arthur, wrapped in his cloak, sleeping on the open ground in the centre of his army.

It was a night of broken rest, especially for those lying round the British General; interrupted by the restiveness of horses and the arrival of deserters from the French lines.

Our glances [says an English officer] were constantly directed towards the point from whence the sun was to rise for the last time on many hundreds who were here assembled . . . while Sir Arthur, occasionally asking the hour, showed he looked for daylight with as much anxiety as any of us.¹

At last the dawn broke, "and", says Schaumann,* "as the sky grew ever redder and redder in the east—that is to say, in the direction of the enemy, we were awakened by a fierce rattling of musketry accompanied by bursts of gunfire".²

It was to be a day of intense heat, and as the July sun rose over Talavera, it disclosed the British position. "To the left there lay a somewhat low chain of hills, on the right was the town and the Tagus, and in the centre a plain and a lofty height occupied by our troops . . . The position was about two and a half miles in breadth . . ."³

The first round of the fighting on this day went to the British, after which the French army withdrew to their own positions, where King Joseph,† Marshals Victor ‡ and Jourdan,§ held a council of war. And whilst they conferred

¹ *Peninsular Sketches*, Vol. I, p. 139. ² Schaumann, p. 184.

³ *Ibid.*

* A young commissary officer of the King's German Legion, author of *On the Road with Wellington*.

† Joseph Buonaparte, the brother of Napoleon, who made him King of Spain. A kind, harmless man.

‡ Victor, Perrin Claude, Marshal, 1764-1841. Duc de Bellune (Empire title).

§ Jourdan, Jean Baptiste, Marshal, 1762-1833. Chief of Staff to Joseph Buonaparte in Spain.

their army prudently resolving to do no more fighting on empty stomachs, began to light their fires and cook their dinners. "This", observes a British officer, "was a painful sight to us, who felt acutely for our starving soldiery, who began to feel the most pinching want."¹

And whilst the French ate their tasty dinners, the English dug graves. For the weather was terribly hot, and orders were sent to bury those who had fallen.

... It was curious [says an eye-witness] to see the soldiers burying their fallen comrades, with the cannon shot falling around and in the midst of them, leaving it probable, that an individual might thus be employed digging his own grave.²

Meanwhile the British General, husbanding his own resources, lay peacefully asleep upon the ground.

Towards midday the French, fed and refreshed, launched their general attack, and for the rest of the day both sides settled down to fierce and heavy fighting, which ended at nightfall with a French defeat.

The battle [said Sir Arthur] was a most desperate one. Our loss has been very great, that of the enemy larger . . . we had about two to one against us; fearful odds! but we maintained all our positions, and gave the enemy a terrible beating.³

Comes now the hideous aftermath of victory—the realization of torn and mangled bodies—the bald beastliness of war shorn of the delirium of fighting, which anæsthetizes its horrors.

But there was no anæsthesia to lift the pain of the surgeon's knife, which in those days had to be borne as best it might. Passing a convent which had been converted into a hospital after the battle, even the un-squeamish Schaumann was affected by what was occurring within.

"Never shall I forget", says he, "the heartrending cries

¹ *Peninsular Sketches*, Vol. I, p. 244.

² *Ibid.* pp. 243, 244.

³ *Dispatches*, Vol. IV, p. 510.

which could be heard . . . while from one of the windows the amputated arms and legs were being flung out upon a small square below.”¹

The sufferings of the wounded were further augmented by inadequacy of hospital supplies, and even of the barest necessities of life, a state of affairs which roused the hot indignation of the English General who, as always, personally visited his hospitals, and made himself acquainted with the condition of his wounded.

It is positively a fact [he wrote to Mr. Frere * the British Minister in Spain] that . . . at this moment there are nearly 4,000 wounded soldiers dying in the hospital in this town from want of common assistance and necessaries, which any other country would have given even to its enemies . . .²

But that which affected the English General more deeply than all else was the abandonment of these same wounded by Cuesta, who had been left in Talavera to guard them.

News having been received that Soult, who had not been engaged in the Battle of Talavera, was advancing upon the Allies through the Pass of Baños, it was agreed between Sir Arthur and the Spanish Generalissimo, that the British army should march to oppose him whilst Cuesta remained behind to hold Talavera and protect the wounded lying in that city.

Accordingly, therefore, on August 3rd, Sir Arthur marched from Talavera, believing that he had left his wounded with adequate protection.

But that very night Cuesta lost his nerve, abandoned his post, and with all his troops came panicking in upon the long-suffering British army.

General Wellesley’s first thought was for his precious wounded. “By indefatigable exertions”, says Lord London-

¹ Schaumann, p. 293.

² *Dispatches, Vol. IV, p. 519.*

* Frere, John Hookham, Diplomatist and Author, 1769-1846. British Minister in Spain 1808-9.

derry, "and by sacrificing a great quantity of baggage, Sir Arthur Wellesley got together forty cars, which enabled us to bring forward in all about two thousand men. . . ." ¹

There were, however, of necessity many left behind, and some distressing incidents occurred.

The abandonment of the town [states Lord Londonderry] was, as may be imagined, a most heart-rending scene. Such of our poor soldiers as were in a condition to move at all, crawled after us, some still bleeding, and many more with their wounds open and undressed; whilst those whose hurts were too severe to permit of this, lay upon their pallets, and implored their comrades not to desert them.²

The abandonment of Talavera by an ally was a bitter pill for the British General to swallow, since it robbed him of the fruits of his hard-won victory, for on August 7th, the French General, Victor, who had been watching for just such an eventuality, returned and occupied the city.

The tide of war now set strongly against General Wellesley. The force under Soult, which he estimated to be about 15,000, resolved itself into a much more formidable array, and on arrival at Oropesa he found that the corps of both Soult and Ney lay between him and the passage of the Tagus at Almaraz. He was now, with his half-starved little army of 23,000, brought up against a strong force of 53,000 good French troops who cut off his retreat by the bridge of Almaraz.

His danger was extreme; if he fought and lost the battle against the forces of Soult and Ney he was without retreat; if Ney and Soult avoided battle until they were joined by Victor, the English General would then have to fight an action against their combined forces, equally without retreat. "The fate of the Peninsula", says Napier, "hung by a thread . . ." ³

General Wellesley, however, did not put it to the test, but wisely withdrawing from his perilous position marched towards Jaraicejo, where he remained until starvation drove him out.

¹ *Londonderry, Vol. I, p. 418.*

² *Ibid., pp. 417, 418.*

³ *Napier, Vol. II, p. 185.*

The sun of success and prosperity had now temporarily set on Arthur's horizon ; and he was in for a spell of bad weather again, both at home and abroad.

Nevertheless there was one bright gleam shining through the darkness, and that was the arrival of his brother, Richard, as British Ambassador in Spain.* It was just as well that the younger had this source of comfort and support, for his troubles and perplexities at this time were legion, the predominating one being the all-vital question of sustenance.

For the starving of his army still continued, and not only did the Spanish fail to supply the provisions promised, but they even looted the meagre supplies coming to the British army.

I have to inform your Excellency [he wrote General Cuesta] that as Mr. Commissary Richardson was coming from Truxillo, with bread and barley for the British army, he was pursued by a body of Spanish cavalry, which contrived to get from him all the barley. He secured the bread, a small part of which, however, the Spanish cavalry forced him to give up . . .¹

Remonstrances to Cuesta were useless, whose behaviour to the British General was consistently the same, whatever his request.

No satisfaction being forthcoming on any count, General Wellesley on August 11th intimated to Cuesta his intention of withdrawing from Spain, unless the Spanish Government made proper arrangements to supply his army.

On August 12th, Cuesta had a paralytic stroke, which deprived him of the use of his left leg, and he resigned his command.

His place was taken by General Eguia. The change, if anything, as far as Sir Arthur Wellesley was concerned, was

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. V, p. 22.*

* The Marquess Wellesley arrived in Spain at the end of July. He held the office of Ambassador for a few months only, returning to England in November to take up the office of Foreign Secretary, an office which he held until 1812.

rather worse than better ; Eguia even assailed the Englishman's integrity, and accused him of misrepresentation of facts—

Your Excellency will observe in General Eugugia's letter to me [wrote Arthur in an official despatch to his brother Richard at Seville] . . . a very injurious, improper, and unfounded assertion, that I made use of the want of provisions as a pretext for withdrawing from Spain ; and that it was a false one, for that there were plenty of provisions for the army . . .

Señor Lozano de Torres, the Spanish superintendent attached to this army, declared publicly yesterday, that he could prove that the British army, instead of wanting food, had received double rations ever since it arrived in Spain ; and yet this same gentleman has expressed to me in the most indignant terms, more than once, the shame he felt, as a Spaniard, on account of the manner in which we had been treated, and the privations which we were made to endure ; which expressions he acknowledges this day.¹

Against such a state of affairs it was impossible to struggle ; it was like fighting a jelly-fish which gave way at all points but did nothing. The British army was floundering in a dangerous quicksand, and every day saw it sinking deeper into this yielding menace.

Lest it should sink beyond the reach of succour, its General began to draw it to firmer ground.

After having made an effort to maintain myself here [he wrote on August 19th], I find it quite impossible. We are starving, our men falling sick, and we have nothing to give them in the way of comfort for their recovery ; and our horses are dying by hundreds in the week . . . We have no means of transport, and I shall be obliged to leave my ammunition on the ground, on quitting this place . . .

Under these circumstances . . . I have determined to withdraw towards the frontiers of Portugal, and I shall begin my march tomorrow.²

On August 20th, therefore, the British army left Jaraicejo and commenced its march towards Badajoz, the Spanish fortress, lying upon the frontier of Portugal.

Whilst Arthur was struggling hard to keep his head above water in Spain, and carry out the task allotted to him, a

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. V, pp. 63, 64.

² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

certain section of his countrymen at home were once more engaged in belittling his labours, and feeding their political animosity by attacking the gallant soldier who bore the heat and burden of the day.

The news, therefore, of Talavera, barked out by the Tower guns on August 15th, instead of being the signal for united rejoicing, had commenced a political controversy; for another victory from Sir Arthur Wellesley was a bit more than the Opposition could stomach. They therefore set about to turn it into a defeat.

It was a harder job, however, to maltreat him this time, for quite a few Englishmen, the Government included, were genuinely proud of the success of the British arms, and sought to honour the victor.

He was accordingly raised to the peerage, as Baron Douro of Oporto, and Viscount Wellington of Talavera, which was not at all to the liking of the Opposition.

They cheered up, however, at the news of the British withdrawal across the Tagus, and reports of Sir Arthur's march to Badajoz heartened them up still further. It almost looked as if they had a case against him once again. Of what use to fight a battle without results, and then retire to the frontier of Portugal?

The Opposition terrier, Creevey, was kept busy nosing round public opinion. On November 12th he ran into Abercromby,* but drew a blank in that quarter.

He is as artificial as the devil—[he reports] will scarcely touch politicks—thinks, however, the Wellesleys will now be beat if they are attacked properly; upon which I fire into our leaders for their meanness in not having attacked them long ago.¹

By the time Parliament opened in the New Year, the Opposition had worked themselves up into a state of righteous

¹ *The Creevey Papers, Vol. I, p. 223.*

* James Abercromby, 1st Baron Dunfermline, 1776-1858. Third son of General Sir Ralph Abercromby. Entered Parliament in 1807. A Whig. Speaker from 1835 to 1839.

indignation against the victor of Talavera. "In the Lords", says Creevey, "Grey made an admirable speech, disputed the military, moral and intellectual fame of Lord Wellington most capitally . . ." ¹

The Opposition at this time were very busy preparing ammunition to defeat the Wellington vote of thanks, and Creevey, in particular, was in his element.

On this occasion, however, Sir Arthur's enemies got the worst of it, and Creevey was left lamenting that—"All our indignation against Wellington ended in smoak. Opposition to his thanks was so unpopular that some of the stoutest of our crew slunk away . . ." ²

He was further upset on February 8th, by "a message from the King to the House of Commons for £2,000 per ann. for Lord Wellington. This is too bad!" ³

But on February 21st he cheered up again on being invited to draw up a petition for the Common Council of London to protest against Lord Wellington's pension. ". . . I think", says he with satisfaction, "I can make a very good case for them and a damned pinching one for Wellington . . ." ⁴

His efforts were successful as far as the Common Council of London was concerned, who passed a motion to send the petition to the House of Commons.

This was one of the best hits I ever made [declares Creevey with jubilation] to get this history of Wellington thus handed down to posterity on the Journals of Parliament . . . The obligation of the Wellesley family to me is this—that, but for me, my Lord Wellington would only have been the object of a resolution of the Common Council; whereas they have now introduced him with their strictures upon his character to parliamentary notice and history . . . ⁵

But the gallant officer overseas against whom this invective had been hurled, squared his shoulders and met the onslaught with the philosophy of a soldier.

¹ *The Creevey Papers, Vol. I, p. 123.*

² *Ibid., p. 127.*

³ *Ibid., pp. 127, 128.*

⁴ *Ibid., pp. 130, 131.*

⁵ *Ibid., pp. 131, 132.*

Attacked by Common Council

“ I see that the Common Council of the City of London have desired that my conduct should be enquired into [he wrote Lord Liverpool] . . . I cannot expect mercy at their hands, whether I succeed or fail ; and if I should fail, they will not inquire whether the failure is owing to my own incapacity, to the blameless errors to which we are all liable, to the faults or mistakes of others, to the deficiency of our means, to the serious difficulties of our situation, or to the great power and abilities of our enemy. In any of these cases, I shall become their victim ; but I am not to be alarmed by this additional risk, and whatever may be the consequences, I shall continue to do my best in this country.” ¹

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. V, p. 392.*

Chapter Ten

WAITING AND WATCHING BUSACO

IT is necessary to return to the British army in the month of August 1809, in the act of commencing its march towards Badajoz; a tired and sick army, crawling wearily upon its way, weak and debilitated, and feeling badly the effects of under-feeding and privation.

... There are few, if any, officers or soldiers [wrote Sir Arthur to Lord Castlereagh] ... who, although doing their duty, are not more or less effected by dysentery, and the whole lie out, and nothing can be got for them in this part of the country.¹

Neither was he himself exempt from illness, for he was suffering at that time from a low fever, and "was for two days so unwell that he was obliged to travel in a carriage . . ." ²

At length on September 3rd the weary trek ended, and headquarters were established at Badajoz, where they remained until the following December.

Letters of congratulation on the victory of Talavera now began to arrive from home, the one from the Prime Minister containing the news that Arthur was to be made a Baron and Viscount. He accepted the intimation with respectful gratitude for this mark of his Sovereign's favour, but his indifference to the title itself is seen in his impersonal attitude towards it, and the details concerning it were left entirely to his brother, William Wellesley Pole.

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. V, p. 71.

² *Sherer, Military Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 265.

Pole has been very much embarrassed [he told John Villiers] about a title for me. He could not take Lord Wellesley's without his leave, nor Talavera without the consent of the government of Spain ; and I fancy he has taken his chance.¹

In the end it was settled as already stated that he was to be Baron Douro of Oporto, and Viscount Wellington of Talavera.

Even Spain did not forget him, for he was made a Captain General of the Spanish army with the pay of that rank, and presented with six Andalusian horses. He accepted the horses but declined the pay, not wishing to add to the burdens of the Spanish exchequer.

Lord Wellington was now very anxious to pay a visit to Lisbon, for in the fertile soil of his mind the seed of a vast scheme was beginning to germinate—a seed which in the course of a year was to grow into a mighty tree, upon whose branches the Portuguese nation was to climb to safety. But of this great plan men knew nothing, and merely looked upon the General's visit to Lisbon as a politic affair.

He was not able to set out, however, as soon as he intended, for he was still far from well, and could not shake off the low fever which had assailed him on the march to Badajoz.

On October 4th he held a review of General Hill's Division, and a young officer but lately arrived, watched him with earnest attention, as he passed slowly down the line.

. . . I was much struck [he observes] with his countenance ; and, in his quick-glancing eye, prominent nose, and pressed lip, saw, very distinctly marked, the ready presence of mind, and imperturbable decision of character, so essential in a leader . . .²

By October 8th Lord Wellington felt well enough to leave for Lisbon. Nothing escaped his eagle eye on the road thither, and an officer, moving his luggage with army transport, was nicely caught.

Now the use of army carts for private baggage was an

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 362.*

² *Sherer, Recollections, pp. 73, 74.*

unforgiveable sin, as the procuring of carts for army transport was one of the greatest difficulties with which the British General had to contend during the whole of the Peninsular Campaign.

The Commander-in-Chief had quite a lot to say about it.

I met upon the road at Arrayolos [he observed] a cart belonging to the Commissariat . . . drawing Major —'s baggage.

First, I do not know what business the — light dragoons have with a cart belonging to them, after the repeated orders given upon the subject . . .

In the second place, if a regiment has a cart, it must not be employed in carrying the baggage of an officer, and particularly must not be sent 100 miles from the regiment in order to carry his baggage . . .

Thirdly, I am surprised that Major — should have stayed so long from his regiment since his arrival in Portugal, and that he should only now have joined it.¹

During the Commander-in-Chief's stay at Lisbon, other officers were called to account for behaving badly in theatres.

I cannot conceive [he informed the officer in charge of the troops at Lisbon] for what reason the officers of the British army should conduct themselves at Lisbon in a manner which would not be permitted in their own country, is contrary to rule and custom in this country, and is permitted in none where there is any regulation or decency of behaviour . . .

The officers of the army can have nothing to do behind the scenes, and it is very improper that they should appear upon the stage during the performance. They must be aware that the English public would not bear either the one or the other, and I see no reason why the Portuguese public should be worse treated.²

Lord Wellington left Lisbon on October 27th, and by the 29th was back at Badajoz, fortified with the knowledge that the foundations of his great plan had been laid—a knowledge which sustained him in the difficult days that followed. For as he listened to the doleful croakings of friend and foe, who openly discussed evacuating the Peninsula, he hugged to himself the secret of the Lines of Torres Vedras, that vast

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. V, p. 212.

² *Ibid.*, p. 242.

scheme of fortifications that were soon to astonish the world.

There was no more fighting until the following September, though the interim was by no means a holiday for the Commander-in-Chief, but a time of strenuous preparation upon which depended the future success or failure of the campaign.

During this period [says Sherer] lord Wellington was much and closely occupied in his bureau. There he worked alone, with simplicity and with the common secrecy of reserve; but without the slightest ostentation; no solemn mystery; no pomp or concealment; and never one look of importance . . . he directed every movement throughout the land, north as well as south; looking upon every road, and every stream, and every strong sierra, from the still observatory of his mind; while, as he bent over his maps and plans, he considered the correspondence and reports submitted to him. He answered all important communications with his own hand, and conveyed his instructions with that minute clearness which precluded the possibility of his being misunderstood.¹

This period of preparation was for Lord Wellington a time of acute anxiety, for apart from the difficulties and complications inseparable from carrying on a war in conjunction with two foreign nations, on their own soil, he was fighting for the continuation of the campaign itself. Both the war and its general were still on trial, neither the one nor the other had completely won the confidence of the British Government who supported them. Only he who carried the weight of the war upon his shoulders felt the complete realization of its dire necessity, for his eyes were opened where others were blind, and he saw the vision of the world's peace lying at the end of the blood-stained road.

It was this vision which held him so strongly to his course, and filled him with ardent anxiety lest the road to peace should be abandoned. For that was all he feared—not the result of the war—but its abandonment.

¹ Sherer, *Military Memoirs*, Vol. I, pp. 292, 293.

Nevertheless, affairs at this period looked black, and there were not wanting those to make them appear still blacker, In Lord Wellington's own army there was a coterie of pessimistic officers who openly voiced their dismal forebodings of ultimate failure, and did not scruple to write their miserable opinions home. So strong and persistent was the wave of pessimism emanating from the British army, that it affected public opinion in England, and rendered the task of hanging on in Portugal of even greater difficulty.

Lord Wellington bore these croakings with infinite patience until August 1810, when, as they still continued, he felt himself constrained to issue a General Order on the subject.

In the same month, too, a loyal young officer* wrote home indignantly voicing his disapproval of the pessimists' behaviour.

I hate grumbling and croaking [he observed], and think it most unsoldier-like in an army such as ours even were we less strong. We must trust to the 'fortune de la guerre', and the abilities of our generals. I wish that every English officer thought the same, and wrote less nonsense to their friends at home.¹

Nevertheless the croaking still continued.

I have always been accustomed to have the confidence and support of the officers of the armies which I have commanded [wrote Lord Wellington to Mr. Stuart † in September 1810], but, for the first time, whether owing to the opposition in England, or whether the magnitude of the concern is too much for their minds and their nerves, or whether I am mistaken, and they are right, I cannot tell; but there is a system of croaking in the army which is highly injurious to the public service, and which I must devise some means of putting an end to, or it will put an end to us. Officers have a right to form their own opinions upon events and transactions; but officers of high rank or situation ought to keep their opinions to themselves: if they do not approve

¹ *Warre, Peninsular Letters*, p. 162.

* Afterwards Lieut.-General Sir William Warre.

† Stuart, afterwards Sir Charles, Baron Stuart de Rothesay, 1779-1845. Succeeded John Villiers as British Minister in Portugal 1810. British Ambassador in Paris 1815-30.

of the system of operations of their commander, they ought to withdraw from the army. And this is the point to which I must bring some, if I should not find that their own good sense prevents them from going on as they have done lately.¹

Arthur's situation during this period was indeed an unavoidable one. He was in the position of an actor playing to an uncertain and somewhat hostile audience. His conduct of every part of the campaign was mercilessly criticized, and most of the critics thought they could do much better than the Commander-in-Chief. This criticism extended even to the commissary department, where an underling of that service wrote home to the Treasury giving his ideas as to how the army should be supplied.

He was appointed by me to the Commissariat in June [wrote Lord Wellington to John Villiers in December 1809] and on the 11th July he writes a letter to the Lords of the Treasury, in which he gives them to understand neither more nor less than that the Commissary General, and all his officers, as well as myself, are either knaves or fools ; and that he can save thousands upon thousands to the public, by some new mode he has discovered of supplying the troops with bread. He disclaims at the same time any intention of making a charge against any of us !²

Even Admiral Berkeley* criticized Lord Wellington for chartering schooners to bring supplies up the Mondego, which he was bound to do as the Government victuallers and transports could not pass the bar.

I am much concerned [wrote the harassed General] that you should imagine that measures are adopted for the supply of this army that occasion a useless expense which might be avoided. If ever there was an officer at the head of an army interested (personally I may say) in keeping down the expenses of the army, it is myself, for I am left wholly to my own resources, and am obliged to supply the wants of the allies,

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. VI, pp. 403, 404.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 376.

* George Cranfield Berkeley, Admiral, 1753-1818. Second surviving son of the 4th Earl of Berkeley.

as well as the British army, from what I can get ; and if I fail, God will, I hope, have mercy upon me, for nobody else will.¹

But the Commander-in-Chief had expected abuse, and he accepted it as his daily portion.

During the continuance of this contest [he had written Lord Liverpool], which must necessarily be defensive on our part, in which there may be no brilliant events, and in which, after all, I may fail, I shall be most confoundedly abused, and in the end I may lose the little character I have gained ; but I should not act fairly by the Government if I did not tell them my real opinion, which is, that they will betray the honor and interests of the country if they do not continue their efforts in the Peninsula, which, in my opinion, are by no means hopeless . . .²

In spite of his intense anxiety to be true to the task entrusted to him, and to continue the campaign, he was conscientiously careful not to embarrass the Government in any way, and asked only for the minimum of what he needed.

. . . If I can bring 30,000 effective British troops into the field [he told John Villiers], I will fight a good battle for the possession of Portugal . . . I do not mean to say that more troops would not be desirable ; but it must be obvious to you, First, that the Government could not give more ; and if I thought 30,000 men sufficient, I should not have acted honestly by them if I had not told them what I thought the lowest number that could do the business . . .³

Another great source of embarrassment to the Commander-in-Chief at this particular time (as indeed it remained during the whole of the war) was the indiscretion of the English newspapers.

I beg to draw your Lordship's attention [he wrote the Secretary of State] to the frequent paragraphs in the English newspapers, describing the position, the numbers, the objects and the means of obtaining them, possessed by the armies in Spain and Portugal.

In some instances the English newspapers have accurately stated, not only the regiments occupying a position, but the number of men fit for duty of which each regiment was composed ; and this intelligence must have reached the enemy . . . at a moment at which it was most important that he should not receive it.

The newspapers have recently published an account of the defensive

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. V, p. 419. ² *Ibid.*, p. 310. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 412.

positions occupied by the different English and Portuguese corps, which certainly conveyed to the enemy the first knowledge he had of them ; and I enclose a paragraph recently published, describing the line of operation which I should follow . . . the preparations which I had made for that operation, and where I had formed my magazines.¹

In December 1809 Lord Wellington withdrew his army into Portugal and established headquarters at Viseu.

His official despatches were now addressed to Lord Liverpool,* who had succeeded Lord Castlereagh as Secretary of State for War.

It was fortunate for the Commander-in-Chief that this office still lay in friendly hands. The tone of Lord Liverpool's letters was always cordial and sympathetic, and to his official ones he invariably added a friendly private one, which sometimes contained news of Arthur's little family, to whom Lord Liverpool always showed the greatest kindness.

Arthur's own children, however, never caused him to forget his adopted Indian child, and even in the midst of his absorption in Peninsular affairs, we find his thoughts had drifted across to India. "Pray how does Salabut Khan get on ?" he was enquiring of Major Barclay in a letter of December 3rd, 1810. "Though he did call me a — because I would not allow him to eat pork, I cannot avoid being anxious about him."²

The winter of 1809-10 wore itself away, and spring found the British army still inactive, and its Commander waiting and watching.

I am in a situation in which no mischief can be done to the army [he wrote Colonel Torrens † in March] or to any part of it ; I am prepared for all events ; and if I am in a scrape, as appears to be the general belief in England, although certainly not my own, I'll get out of it.³

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. V, p. 299. ² *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. VI, p. 432.

³ *Dispatches*, Vol. V, p. 590.

* Jenkinson, Robert Banks, 2nd Earl of Liverpool, 1770-1828. Secretary of State for War, 1809-1812. Prime Minister from 1812-1827.

† Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief in England. Afterwards Sir Henry Torrens, Major-General, 1779-1828.

He was prepared even for that event which his gallant soul refused to contemplate—evacuation; and every adequate arrangement had been made for the orderly and decorous departure of his forces should such a course become necessary.

... When we do go [he observes in a letter to Lord Liverpool] I feel a little anxiety to go, like gentlemen, out of the hall door, particularly after the preparations which I have made to enable us to do so, and not out of the back door, or by the area.¹

Lord Wellington was still badly harassed for money, and was expected to run the campaign and supply the demands of the Allies on an empty purse. "If you cannot supply us with money," he wrote at last in desperation to the British Government, "you ought to withdraw us. We are reduced to the greatest distress."²

Nevertheless he still hung on, and in the month of May was even able to bring his thoughts to the purchasing of old port.

I have been much flattered lately by Lord Wellington's reception of me [wrote young Warre to his father], and lately remained two days at his headquarters at Celerico.... He has applied to me to procure him one Hghd. of very fine old Port.... He says he thinks you ought to get one for him in return for his having taken away my snuff box, though I am sorry to confess he has not made me leave off that vile custom, though he made me promise not to carry a box....³

But Lord Wellington's army was committing worse crimes than taking snuff, and the behaviour of the troops was still giving him much anxiety.

They have killed eight people since the army returned to Portugal in December [he was writing to the Adjutant-General in April], and I am sorry to add that a convoy has seldom arrived with money that the chests have not been broken open, and some of the money stolen by the soldiers in whose charge it was placed.... and they have never brought up either shoes or other necessaries.... that they have not stolen some of the articles committed to their charge.⁴

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. VI, p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 141.

³ *Warre, Peninsular Letters*, p. 126.

⁴ *Dispatches*, Vol. VI, p. 27.

Spring gave place to summer and still the British Commander watched and waited.

The French were stirring in his direction now and were engaged in the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, a Spanish frontier fortress.

Still Lord Wellington remained quiescent, not to be lured from his path to rush to its defence.

... He is not the rash man he was [wrote Charles Napier * to his mother on July 1st], or Ciudad would ere this have been relieved ... my persuasion is that the siege was little more than a battle-trap for his lordship, which he has not been caught in.¹

It was hard, however, to stand by and leave Ciudad Rodrigo to its fate, and to have to resist the repeated calls for help sent out by its gallant governor Herrasti.

"Nevertheless," says Napier, "Wellington absolutely refused to venture even a brigade, and thus proved himself a truly great commander and of a steadfast mind. It was not a single campaign but a terrible war he had undertaken."²

On July 10th Ciudad Rodrigo fell, and, as Lord Wellington had expected, he became greatly out of favour with the Spanish in consequence.

We have not received a letter from Spain or any intelligence for the last ten days [he wrote his brother Henry on July 19th], and the officers who are out on the flanks of the army tell me that not only they can get no intelligence, but can scarcely procure anybody to carry their letters. This is not encouraging.³

Arthur's worries, however, did not make him forget his friends, and when about this time the Duchess of Richmond

¹ *Life of Sir Charles Napier, Vol. I*, p. 231.

² *Napier, Vol. II*, p. 408. ³ *Dispatches, Vol. VI*, p. 271.

* Afterwards the famous General, Sir Charles James Napier, Conqueror of Scinde. 1782-1853. Eldest son of Colonel the Hon. George Napier and Lady Sarah Lennox (née). Served in the Peninsula under Sir John Moore and Lord Wellington. Was five times wounded at Coruña. Wounded at Busaco.

wrote to say that her eldest boy, Lord March, was coming out to join the army in the Peninsula, he seems to have looked upon him as a special charge, made careful arrangements for his journey and was never too busy to let the parents know of their son's welfare.

Pray let the Duke of Richmond know how we are situated here [he is writing a few months after the young man's arrival]. March is very well . . . I have made him one of my secretaries, in order that I may give him something more to do, and that he may learn more of what is going on, and acquire habits of attending to business. He is really the finest and best disposed fellow I ever saw.”¹

Towards the end of July a series of skirmishes with the enemy outposts were taking place, culminating in the combat of the Coa, in which the British were driven back with heavy losses. This contretemps was caused by General Craufurd's* disobedience to Lord Wellington's orders. Yet in spite of this we find the latter generously omitting to censure. “ . . . If I am to be hanged for it,” he observed to his brother William, “ I cannot accuse a man who I believe has meant well, and whose error is one of judgement, and not of intention . . . ”²

The fall of Almeida, a Portuguese frontier fortress, on August 27th was the next piece of bad fortune which fell to the Allies.

This event stirred up the Portuguese Government, and they wrote to Lord Wellington expressing the hope that the unpleasant impression it had made upon the public might be speedily dispelled by some decisive success of the Allied armies.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VII, p. 2.*

² *Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 563.*

* Robert Craufurd, Brigadier-General, 1764-1812. Sir Charles Napier observes of him: “ At one time he was all fire and intelligence, a master-spirit in war; at another, as if possessed by the demon, he would madly rush from blunder to blunder, raging in folly: the demon was strong at this period . . . ” [July, 1810]. *Life of Sir Charles Napier*, Vol. I, p. 131.

But again the British General was not to be bluffed into any foolhardy enterprise.

... Much as I wish to remove the impression which this misfortune has justly made on the public [he wrote Dom Miguel de Forjaz *], I do not propose to alter the system and plan of operations which have been determined, after the most serious deliberation, as most adequate to further the general cause of the allies, and, consequently of Portugal.¹

The French now began to move in earnest and by September 17th had entered in force the valley of the Mondego where Lord Wellington's forces were at that time disposed.

He now began quietly to retire. Had the croakers some justification after all?

But the lion was only crouching before a spring, and the French and the croakers had both to learn of Wellington. "that he was only prepared to retire when he thought it was policy to do so, but that he was not in the least inclined to let himself be hunted down".²

Instead, therefore, of being driven to the sea, and the waiting transports; on September 21st he turned sharply and, drawing his army into the mountains, stood at bay upon the Sierra de Busaco.†

On the summit of this ridge stood a lonely monastery and here the British General established his headquarters.

Here too lived Brother José who kept a record of these stirring events.

The French were not yet arrived in force, and several days of skirmishing and manœuvring ensued. Happy days of clean, straightforward soldiering in the pure air of the mountain-tops. For awhile Arthur left his worries below, and lived the life he loved.

He was up every morning at five, "by seven he went outside to inspect the battlefield and the army, by four

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. VI, p. 384.*

² *Schaumann, p. 244.*

* A Minister of the Portuguese Government.

† A mountain ridge covering the town of Coimbra.

o'clock in the afternoon he returned to his own room, and dined at five".¹

This state of affairs continued for several days, but on September 26th there was something bigger in the wind, for, says Brother José, "as soon as the General was up, he gave orders that all his camp furniture and baggage should be taken outside the convent grounds . . . By mid-day, however, all the staff returned to the monastery and orders were sent to get dinner ready."²

On the 26th the French army under Massena began to arrive in full strength and by nightfall "a dark and dense multitude reposed in massive columns at the foot of the allied position which rose abruptly above them to an elevation of from two to three hundred feet".³

At six o'clock on the following morning the French attacked, and for the rest of the day strove with desperate gallantry to drive the British eagle from his eyrie in the clouds. But they strove in vain, and darkness found the Allied position intact, and the Allied army very little the worse for the efforts of the day.

As for the army's commander, the very sight of his grey coat and plain low hat filled his troops with confidence.

As usual, of course [says Schaumann], Lord Wellington displayed extraordinary circumspection, calm, coolness and presence of mind. His orders were communicated in a loud voice, and were short and precise. In him there is nothing of the bombastic pomp of the Commander-in-Chief surrounded by his glittering staff. He wears no befeathered hat, no gold lace, no stars, no orders—simply a plain low hat, a white collar, a grey overcoat, and a light sword.⁴

As usual, the French and English fought each other without the smallest rancour, and during a lull in the fighting both sides were slaking their thirst at a small stream which ran at

¹ *The Monk of Bussaco.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Sherer, Military Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 14.*

⁴ *Schaumann, p. 249.*

the bottom of the British position, "and even leaning over to shake hands with each other".¹

We spoke to each other as though we were the greatest friends [says George Napier] and without the least animosity or angry feeling Very soon Lord Wellington, finding we remained as he thought too long below, ordered the bugles to sound the retreat, and the French general having done the same, off scampered the soldiers of each army . . . like a parcel of schoolboys called in from play by their master.²

In this action were wounded two of Lord Wellington's favourite officers, Charles and George Napier, and in spite of his many preoccupations the Commander-in-Chief found time to write a personal letter to their mother apprising her of their condition.

I am concerned to be again the channel of conveying to you intelligence of a distressing nature [he informed her], but you received the last which I communicated to you in a manner so becoming yourself that I have less reluctance in writing to you than I had on the former occasion, although the cause is more serious. The army was engaged with the enemy on the 27th, and your sons Charles and George were wounded. I saw the former after he was wounded, and he was well and in good spirits, although he had a severe but not a dangerous wound in the jaw. George is wounded in the hip, but very slightly and both are doing well.³

On the night of the battle the British troops lay under arms as a further attack was expected on the morrow.

It did not, however, materialize, for Massena had another plan, and towards evening withdrew his army from before Busaco, and set it marching across the mountains to turn the Allies' left.

But he was not quick enough to steal a march, for as his troops were moving off,

. . . Wellington arrived from the right, and looked at the distant columns with great earnestness; he seemed uneasy, his countenance wore a fierce angry expression, and suddenly mounting his horse he rode

¹ *Sherer, Recollections*, p. 220.

² *Sir George Napier*, pp. 245, 246.

³ *Life of Sir Wm. Napier*, p. 71.

away without speaking: one hour afterwards the whole army was in movement.¹

The British General, however, did not forget his hosts of the monastery, where surely he must have been extremely comfortable since Don José states that—

For the Lord Wellington, we gave the best dinner napkins that there were, 4 dozen candles, besides everything else that the other officers were continually asking for; even to the soldiers . . . The Lord Wellington when he was leaving the convent sent to let the Prior know that he wished to pay for what had been used if he would say how much he required.

Our Prior replied that all he wanted was the peace of the Kingdom.²

So the General took his leave and went his way to work and fight for that peace for which doubtless the ecclesiastic prayed.

¹ *Napier, Vol. III, pp. 28, 29.*

² *The Monk of Bussaco.*

Chapter Eleven

WITHIN THE LINES

The man Wellington stood there strong and alone;—looking ever to the possible;—doing always the utmost that could be done; and then calm as to the event.

MOYLE SHERER.

‘THE pride of France’, says Sherer, “had been checked, and the heart of Portugal had been cheered; but it was not by the ridge of Busaco that the strong tide of invasion could effectually be stayed.”¹

None knew this better than Lord Wellington himself, who was now leading his victorious army in leisurely retreat. Whither was he going? Decidedly he was heading for the sea—and the tongues of the croakers began to clack again.

Nevertheless, the General was in excellent spirits. “I am quite certain the French will not get Portugal this winter”, he was writing to the British Minister, Mr. Stuart, on September 30th, “unless they receive a very large reinforcement indeed. It is probable that they will not succeed, even in that case.”²

This hardly sounded like a man about to evacuate.

And again on October 3rd he was telling his brother Henry that—“My opinion is, that the French are in a crape.”³

But then Arthur was not taking his army into the sea as

¹ Sherer, *Military Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 19.

² *Dispatches*, Vol. VI, p. 451.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 456.

the French and a good many others supposed. Instead he was leading it (together with a large portion of the civilian population of Portugal) into the Lines of Torres Vedras,* a large tract of fortified country, alive with redoubts and emplacements, and bristling with guns like quills on the back of a porcupine ; the whole being further protected by nature's fortifications of rushing rivers and soaring mountains. This was the great enterprise that had been the paramount occupation of his fertile brain for a year past, and the object of his periodical visits to Lisbon. This the impregnable barrier thrown across the pursuers' path, which was to make the French General Massena gnash his teeth in impotent fury.

But it had been carried on in secret, for the Commander-in-Chief had had enough of *leaking kettles*, and only Colonel Fletcher, the Engineer responsible for carrying out the works, and the officers under him (besides those actually employed upon them), knew what was in the wind. It was as complete a surprise to the British army as it was to the enemy.

* The best way to visualize the Lines of Torres Vedras is to take the map and look at the block of country between Torres Vedras and Lisbon. It forms a peninsula, and is bounded on one side by the Atlantic, and on the other by the Tagus. Horizontally across this little peninsula ran the famous lines of defence consisting of three main lines which were again subdivided into smaller ones. "The lines . . . consisted of two distinct ranges of hills . . . extending from the sea to the Tagus . . . they derived their strength and value primarily from their peninsular situation on the sea which precluded the possibility of an enemy manoeuvring on, or turning their flanks, and assured their rear being constantly open for the defenders to receive supplies and reinforcements . . ." (Jones, *Journal of Sieges in Spain*, Vol. III, pp. 42-5). ". . . Upon the lines of defence a triple chain of redoubts was most skilfully disposed. From these, and other batteries, 600 pieces of cannon swept all the approaches . . . The right of these lines was moreover flanked by a division of British gun-boats on the Tagus . . . a very fine corps of English marines lay in reserve near Lisbon, and a great fleet was in the harbour . . ." (Sherer, *Military Memoirs of the Duke of Wellington*, Vol. II, pp. 25-6).

Arthur must surely have enjoyed his big little joke against the croakers, now flapping dismally away, like vultures cheated of a feast.

The fortifying of this great tract of country, however, was only part of Lord Wellington's great plan ; for hand in hand with the scheme of defence within the Lines, was the scheme of devastation without, which consisted in laying waste the country to be occupied by the enemy, and destroying all means of subsistence. Crops, vineyards, mills, orchards, everything capable of producing a mouthful of food for man or beast had to be razed to the ground, and the population were ordered to evacuate. This system of devastation was quite comprehensible to the Portuguese mind, for it was, as Oman points out, "an ancient Portuguese device practised from time immemorial against the Castilian invader . . ." ¹

Lord Wellington, nevertheless, saw to it that the people were compensated for the necessary damage to their property.

Thus it came about that a pathetic procession of loyal and obedient civilians, homeless, and in many cases destitute, dragged their weary way alongside the army.

Old people, lame and sick people, women just risen from childbed, children, and whole families with all their belongings, packed either on bullock carts, mules, horses or donkeys, were to be seen mixed up with all kinds of beasts, among which pigs, owing to their unruliness and horrible cries, were most conspicuous. . . . Ladies who, according to the custom of the country, had perhaps never left their homes except to go to Mass, could be seen walking along, hand in hand, three in a row, wearing silk shoes and their heads and shoulders covered only with thin scarves. Monks and nuns who had left their monasteries and convents, were walking . . . in procession, not knowing whither they were going.²

But he who led them knew—the British General, the shepherd of this queerly assorted flock—and the weary march ended at length in safety within the sheltering Lines.

Lord Wellington now began to breathe more freely. "I

¹ Oman, Vol. III, p. 184.

² Schaumann, p. 255.

think we are safe for the winter,"¹ he was writing on October 5th, and by the end of the month he was taking a still more cheerful view of the situation. "We have an excellent position, which we are improving every day", he informed Lord Liverpool, "and the army is in good order and spirits, and not sickly."²

The population, too, were beginning to settle down to their strange situation, and life resumed a normal aspect once more.

Lisbon, after the first alarm [says Sherer], became as it were intoxicated by a strong feeling of security: there never was a period when this city was more crowded with objects of misery, or when provisions were more extravagantly dear; yet at no time had their theatres been better filled, their societies more gay and brilliant, than when seventy thousand vindictive enemies lay within sixteen miles of the city, panting for the plunder of it.³

It is a pity that the trust and loyalty to the British Commander, exhibited in so striking and touching a manner by the people of Portugal, was not also shared by their government. The reverse was, however, the case, and led on by their evil genius, Souza, they spent their time in thwarting and pulling against the saviour of their country;

... Since that person [Souza] has been in the Government [Lord Wellington observed to Mr. Stuart] I have not made one proposition of any description in the execution of which he has not thrown difficulties, and has not opposed; but I hope that the time is fast approaching when I shall be relieved from the task of having any business to transact with this gentleman.⁴

Unfortunately, however, this sanguine hope was not realized, and Souza remained for several years longer to plot and intrigue against the English Commander-in-Chief, and add to the difficulties of his thorny path.

The fruit of the folly of the Portuguese Government (to

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 612.*

² *Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 528.*

⁴ *Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 508.*

call it nothing worse) was not long in showing itself, for amongst other contrariness they had omitted in certain districts to carry out Lord Wellington's scheme of devastation, with the result that the enemy found a certain amount of subsistence, and the plan itself, and the sacrifices of the people were robbed of much of their effect. "It is heart-breaking", wrote the Commander-in-Chief in disgust, "to contemplate the chance of failure from such obstinacy and folly."¹

News was a slow traveller in those days, and it was not until October 14th, seventeen days after the Battle of Busaco, that the Tower guns of London barked out the tidings of another victory.

Rumours, however, that an action was imminent had been floating about and authentic news waited for with great anxiety.

"... I feel very uncomfortable," wrote Lady Bessborough, whose son was at the front, "and must do so till I know either that an engagement has taken place and all safe, or that none is likely to happen."²

And again, two days later she writes that, "... Ly. Wellington says if a week passes without hearing of a battle she shall feel quite easy."³

But more than three weeks passed before the arrival of official despatches with their joyful news, when a proud wife, now relieved from anxiety, sent an express letter to a proud mother, who passed on the good news to an equally proud brother. "I had on Sunday evening by an express from Lady Wellington", wrote Arthur's mother to her son Richard, "been informed of the late Splendid Victory and conduct of our Dear Hero. We have indeed reason to be Proud of him."⁴

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. VI, p. 540.

² *Leveson Gower*, Vol. II, p. 366. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

⁴ *British Museum Add. MS. 37325, folio 126.*

To his family at least Arthur was always a source of pride and satisfaction.

The Tory party, too, were heartened up a bit, and gained a shred more confidence, and on October 17th Lord Liverpool sat down to write his congratulations, ending up as usual with news of Kitty and the boys whom he had seen two days previously. "They were all very well. The boys are very much grown, and appear advancing as rapidly as any children I have ever known of the same age."¹

But in spite of the fillip given by Busaco, the British Government was still decidedly jumpy, and Arthur was by no means relieved of the strain caused by their frightened and somewhat half-hearted support.

I acknowledge [he wrote in a private letter to his brother William] that I doubt whether this government (I mean the existing administration in England) have the power, or the inclination, or the nerves to do all that ought to be done to carry the contest on as it might be. I am the commander of the British army without any of the patronage or power that an officer in that situation has always had. I have remonstrated against this system, but in vain. Then I am the mainspring of all the other operations, but it is because I am Lord Wellington; for I have neither influence nor support, nor means of acquiring influence, given to me by the government. I have not authority to give a shilling, or a stand of arms, or a round of musket ammunition to anybody. I do give all, it is true; but it is contrary to my instructions, and at my peril . . .

You can have no idea of the risks I incur every day upon every subject, which not another officer of the army would even look at . . . but if I did not incur these risks, the service in these times could not go on for a moment.²

Yet in spite of all difficulties it did go on, for, as Sherer says, "the man Wellington stood there strong and alone;—looking ever to the possible;—doing always the utmost that could be done; and then calm as to the event."³

But his loneliness at this time was transcendent, for the

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VI, p. 618.* ² *Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 43.*

³ *Sherer, Military Memoirs, Vol. II, p. 34.*

whole world at home and abroad pulled hard against him.

At home the strong tug of the Opposition against the war was greatly strengthened by the newspapers, which continued to impede Lord Wellington's task by placing information in the hands of the enemy.

I enclose a newspaper giving an account of our works [he wrote Lord Liverpool on January 19th (1811)], the number of guns, and men in each, and for what purpose constructed. Surely it must be admitted that those who carry on operations against an enemy, possessed of all the information which our newspapers give to the French, do so under singular disadvantages.¹

We are perfectly well informed by the English, and much better than you are [wrote Marshal Bérthier from Paris, to Massena, a couple of months later]. The Emperor reads the London newspapers, and every day a large number of letters of the opposition, of whom some blame Lord Wellington, and speak of your operations in detail.²

But perhaps the hardest thing that Arthur had to bear at this period was the lack of interest and enthusiasm for the campaign evinced by his own officers, whose one idea seemed to be to get home on leave, irrespective of the inconvenience their absence would cause to their Commander.

The inconvenience of their going is terrible [he complained to the Military Secretary], and the detail it throws upon me greater than I can well manage; for I am first to instruct one, then a second, and afterwards upon his return, the first again, upon every duty. At this moment we have seven General Officers gone or going home; and, excepting myself, there is not one in the country who came out with the army, excepting General Alexander Campbell, who was all last winter in England.³

The consequence of the absence of some of them has been [he wrote Lord Liverpool a few months later, during his spring offensive] that in the late operations I was obliged to be General of Cavalry and of the Advanced Guard, and the leader of two or three columns, sometimes on the same day.⁴

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. VII, p. 155.

² *Supp. Dispatches*, Vol. XIII, pp. 603, 604 (translation).

³ *Dispatches*, Vol. VII, pp. 196, 197. ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 383.

Life, however, was not entirely made up of unpleasant things, and though a good many of these fell to Arthur's share, there was mercifully the other side of the picture, and the army and its chief could play as well as work. None knew better the value of relaxation than Lord Wellington, who was always foremost in efforts to promote it on every possible occasion.

A few weeks after entering the Lines he was giving a ball and feast, and bringing the same earnest attention to the details of his party as he did to the weightier matters of the campaign.

For the Allies it was not a bad winter on the whole. There was security, and plenty to eat and drink within the Lines. Shooting, coursing, and fox-hunting were indulged in wherever possible; even Lord Wellington was able to get some of his favourite sport in the intervals of business and touring the Lines. "He was here about a week ago," wrote General Hill * from Lisbon on December 15th; "he is in high spirits, and seems very confident. He goes out hunting about twice a week."¹

For five months the Allies lay snug and comfortable within the Lines, their cavalry perpetually swooping out upon the enemy with the object of despoiling him of the little sustenance that remained. "A good soldier", wrote a French soldier on the walls of a house in the devastated area, "should have the heart of a lion, the strength of a horse, the appetite of a mouse, and the ferocity of a tiger."²

Nevertheless, in spite of the horrid necessities of war, the French and English continued the campaign in the most friendly spirit, and every opportunity was taken of showing mutual courtesies and amenities.

On Junot being wounded Lord Wellington sent to enquire

¹ *Life of Lord Hill*, p. 154.

² *Schaumann*, p. 272 (translation).

* Hill, Rowland, 1st Viscount Hill. General, 1772-1842. The General in whom Wellington appears to have placed the most reliance.

after his wound, and to offer to supply him with anything he needed for his comfort; "but", says Kincaid, "the French general was too much of a politician to admit the want of anything".¹

On another occasion when the greyhounds of a British officer ran a hare into the French lines, Kincaid tells us that "they very politely returned them".²

Friendly little chats and good-humoured chaffing across a stream which divided the positions of the opposing forces beyond the lines, near Santarem, are mentioned by both Schaumann and Sherer.

About the middle of February [the latter records], as I was one day walking by the river side with three or four companions, we observed an unusual crowd on the opposite bank, and several French officers. They saluted us, with a "Bon jour, Messieurs"; and we soon fell into conversation. They were exceedingly courteous . . . They asked after Lord Wellington; saying he had done wonders with the Portuguese, and praising him greatly for his conduct of the campaign . . . A great deal of good humour prevailed; we quizzed each other freely. They asked us how we liked bacallao and azete, instead of English roast beef? and we, what they did at Santarem without the restaurateurs, cafés, and salles de spectacle of their dear Paris? They replied, laughing, that they had a theatre; and asked us to come over, and witness the performance of that evening, which would be "L'Entrée des François dans Lisbon" ["The French Entry into Lisbon"]. A friend of mine most readily replied, that he recommended to them "La répétition d'une nouvelle pièce, 'La Fuite des François'" ["The Flight of the French"]. They burst into a long, loud, and general laugh:—the joke was too good, too home.³

And so the winter months sped away bringing to the English Commander their ups and downs, their days of light and shadow.

Nevertheless in sunshine or shadow there was one idea that never left him; the certainty of ultimate success. Nothing could tear it from his heart. He was not lying within the

¹ Kincaid, *Adventures*, p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³ Sherer, *Recollections*, pp. 136, 137.

Lines waiting for an occasion to make a graceful departure as so many fancied, but waiting the opportunity to strike. Waiting as ever for the psychological moment, until his adversary, tiring of starvation, should commence that retreat which was to be the signal for the Allies' spring forward. And with that strange prophetic vision, with which the gods had equipped him for his military career, he even foretold the time of that retreat. "They will *march* in March,"¹ he stated one day at the dinner-table before his sceptical guests, none of whom believed that such a thing was possible.

Yet so it was, and the stirrings of spring saw also the stirring of the Allied armies, as rested and refreshed and full of new vigour they were led by their Chief into active warfare again.

¹ *Macfarlane*, p. 91.

Chapter Twelve

MASSENA'S RETREAT—UPS AND DOWNS

Duties were his, and he did them. Events were not his, and to the Great Disposer of all he left them.

MOYLE SHERER.

ON March 5th the French broke up from their position before Santarem, and Massena commenced his retreat as Lord Wellington had foretold.

Days of strenuous action followed, for the British 'view halloo' had sounded, and the British hounds in full cry were following the wily fox. The scent was good and they hunted him keenly across a barren and desolate country.

But the fox was game and the hounds had often to pay for their temerity, for though Massena fled, it was not a craven's fleeing, and ever and anon he turned at bay, and his pursuers felt his teeth. At Pombal, Redhina, Casal Nova, and Foz d'Aronce on March the 11th, 12th, 14th and 15th the opposing armies came to blows, and though the French continued their retreat, some allied casualties strewed their wake.

In these actions Lord Wellington's army had given a splendid account of itself, and its Chief was justly proud of it. Soldiers under sentence of punishment were therefore pardoned, and three sergeants recommended for commissions.

As for the Chief himself, he had as usual been earning the

admiration of his army by his coolness in action. At Redhina, whilst reconnoitring the enemy's position—

His lordship [says Schaumann] rode right into the zone of the French battery fire, and jumping from his horse, examined the position with a telescope. The French battery concentrated its fire on this point, and their shells fell incessantly about the Commander-in-Chief . . . But Lord Wellington did not allow himself to be perturbed by this, and remained dismounted about a quarter of an hour.¹

And at Casal Nova,

in a fog . . . he found a division . . . under Sir William Erskine, much exposed in advance, and nearly separated from the rest of the army, and the French in a village within a mile of where he was standing. He could see nothing. But, on some prisoners being brought in, and being asked what French division and how many men were there in the village, they, to the dismay of everyone except Wellington said that the whole French army was there. All he said was quite coolly, "Oh, they are all there, are they? Well, we must mind a little what we are about then."²

Other stories there are, too, of these strenuous days, records of acts of kindness which somehow Arthur was never too busy to perform. The Napier brothers were as usual casualties, and Lord Wellington again sat down to write a personal letter to their anxious mother.

This [observes George Napier] was most kind and considerate of him, who was commander-in-chief of the army and had scarcely time to eat! His time and thoughts were fully occupied, yet he found a moment to do a kind act which he knew would highly gratify my mother and ease her mind about her sons' wounds.³

There was also the incident of the Irish deserter found amongst some French prisoners during Massena's retreat.

We very soon delivered him up to the provost-marshall [says George Napier], to be taken to Lord Wellington, in hopes that he would have had him shot upon the spot; but his lordship, having made enquiries about him from the officers of his regiment, was inclined to think the

¹ Schaumann, p. 288.

² Larpent, Vol. I, pp. 107, 108.

³ Sir George Napier, p. 189.

miserable man was not right in his senses, having formerly been insane. He therefore sent him a prisoner to England, with a recommendation that he might be permitted to resign his commission without any further inquiry . . . in order to spare his friends the pain of his conduct becoming public. This unfortunate man [continues Napier] was not a person whose family was of any note or even known in the remotest way to Lord Wellington, so that his merciful and delicate conduct towards him was from pure good feeling and a reluctance to do a harsh thing when he could by any justifiable means avoid it.¹

The first check to the Allies progress came on March 16th, when Lord Wellington was forced to halt for supplies, owing to the Portuguese Government having failed to feed their troops.

I was obliged [he wrote Lord Liverpool] either to direct the British Commissary General to supply the Portuguese troops, or to see them perish for want; and the consequence is, that the supplies intended for the British troops are exhausted, and we must halt till more come up, which I hope will be this day.²

The check was fortunately but a short one, and soon the hounds were in full cry again, and by April 3rd had hunted their fox across the Coa, and fought and beat him at Sabugal, after which he turned in the direction of Spain and by April 5th had crossed the frontier.

Portugal, with the exception of the garrison at Almeida, was now freed from the invader. It had taken but a month from the time Massena broke up before the Lines, to drive him out of the country. Lord Wellington's faith and optimism were fully justified, and the croakers of his army left with nothing upon which to whet their teeth.

Nevertheless [says Sherer], those public men and public prints at home, whose patriotic care it was to disparage the exploits of Wellington, and to exalt the generalship of the French, described the retreat of Massena as "*a mere change of position from the Zegere to the Agueda . . .*"³

But this, of course, was only Opposition bluff, and did

¹ Sir George Napier, pp. 173, 174.

² *Dispatches*, Vol. VII, p. 360.

³ Sherer, *Military Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 63.

not represent public opinion in general, which was for the moment in Lord Wellington's favour. Even Samuel Whitbread was coming round and refusing to let politics warp his sense of justice, and Lady Bessborough overheard him saying "that he now believed what he had always before doubted—Lord Wellington's account of the battle of Talavera . . .".¹

And by the end of April Whitbread appears to have made the *amende honorable*, and held out the olive branch to Lord Wellington in a letter which called forth a warm-hearted response from the peace-loving Arthur.

I was most highly gratified by your letter of the 29th April [he wrote in reply] . . . and I beg leave to return my thanks for the mode in which you have taken the trouble of informing me of the favorable change of your opinion respecting affairs in this country.

I acknowledge that I was much concerned to find that persons, for whom I entertained the highest respect, and whose opinions were likely to have great weight in England, and throughout Europe, had delivered erroneous opinions, as I thought, respecting affairs in this country ; and I prized their judgments so highly, at the same time that I was certain of the error of the opinion which they had delivered, that I was induced to attribute their conduct to the excess of the spirit of party. . . . That which gives me most pleasure in the account which I received last night from England, is to be convinced that such men could not be unjust towards an officer in the service of the country abroad ; and that the opinions which they had delivered, however unfavourable to him, were the real dictates of their judgments, upon a fair view of all the circumstances which had come to their knowledge. To the gratification arising from this conviction, to one who appears destined to pass his life in the harness, you have added that which I received from your obliging letter ; and I assure you that I am very sensible of the kindness towards me which induced you to write to me.²

But whilst the British General was only in the middle of the March operations, his staunch partisan, Walter Scott,* had been crowing jubilantly at the doings of his hero.

¹ *Leveson Gower, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 386.*

² *Dispatches, Vol. VII, pp. 585, 586.*

* The great Sir Walter Scott, the famous poet and writer, 1771-1822.

I rejoice with the heart of a Scotsman in the success of Lord Wellington [he wrote a friend on April 6th], and with all the pride of a seer to boot. I have been for three years proclaiming him as the only man we had to trust to—a man of talent and genius not deterred by obstacles, not fettered by prejudices, not immured within the pedantries of his profession—but playing the general and the hero, when most of our military commanders would have exhibited the drill sergeant, or at best the adjutant.¹

And his enthusiasm not to be restrained, the bard burst forth into verse, and wrote “The Vision of Don Rhoderick” in honour of his hero, which called forth a grateful letter from the hero’s wife who could not remain silent, “on the receipt of such a tribute to the fame of the first and best of men”:²

Even his army was praising Lord Wellington’s generalship at last, and on April 6th Charles Napier wrote in his diary that “His whole conduct has been able: errors may have been committed, all generals commit errors, but his successful campaign renders him one of the first of his time.”³

Affairs at headquarters being now in a satisfactory condition, Lord Wellington left the main army, and on April 16th started south to visit the corps under Marshal Beresford* which was engaged in the Siege of Badajoz.

News from the north, however, caused him swiftly to retrace his steps, and five days after his arrival he was dashing back again. For Massena had rallied, and with a force greatly outnumbering the Allied army, had reappeared on the Portuguese frontier with a view to throwing provisions into Almeida.

¹ *Lockhart, Vol. II, p. 160.* ² *Ibid., p. 165.*

³ *Life of Sir Charles Napier, Vol. I, p. 161.*

* William Carr Beresford, General, 1768–1854. An illegitimate son of George de la Poer Beresford, Earl of Tyrone, and afterwards 1st Marquess of Waterford. Beresford re-organized and trained the Portuguese army in the Peninsular War. For this he was made a Marshal in the Portuguese army. Created Viscount Beresford of Beresford in Staffs, 1823.

As a general action seemed now to be inevitable [says Kincaid], we anxiously longed for the return of Lord Wellington . . . as we would rather see his long nose in the fight than a reinforcement of ten thousand men any day . . . and I'll venture to say that there was not a bosom in that army that did not beat more lightly, when we heard the joyful news of his arrival . . .¹

On May 3rd and 5th the French launched two great attacks upon the Allied army in the village of Fuentes de Onor, but were repulsed on both occasions with heavy losses.

A further attack was expected on the 6th, but the French General had had enough of it, and began to withdraw, and by the night of the 9th had taken himself and his whole army across the Azava.

The Campaign of Massena had failed. Portugal was once more free. This spelt victory for Lord Wellington, and was the culmination of all his patient labour.

The news of the French withdrawal was brought to him early in the morning by Lord Aylmer* and was received with almost stoical calm. But then the Commander-in-Chief happened to be shaving at the moment—"a sacred rite with which no emotion was allowed to interfere". "Ay, I thought they meant to be off," he observed, lifting the razor for a moment from his face. "'Very well,' and then another shave, just as before, and not another word till he was dressed."²

The toilet with Arthur was always a solemn function. Not that he was in the least degree foppish, his dress on the contrary being distinguished by its extreme simplicity and lack of ostentation.

On active service he wore a blue or grey frock-coat. "Over this", says Gleig, "that he might be more easily recognized from afar, he often threw a short white cloak."³

¹ *Kincaid, Adventures*, p. 36.

² *Larpent, Vol. I*, p. 108.

* Aylmer Matthew, 5th Baron Balrath, and 8th Baronet, 1775-1850. Served through most of the Peninsular War. One of Lord Wellington's staff. Made Deputy Adjutant-General in 1830. Governor of Canada 1830.

³ *Brialmont and Gleig, Vol. IV*, p. 236.

But however dressed, his appearance was always immaculate and had earned for him the nick-name of "The Beau".

Up to this time he was only aware of the more homely name of "Old Douro", bestowed upon him by his army in remembrance of the famous crossing of the Douro in 1809.

It was not until the day after the Battle of Fuentes de Onor that he first learned of the more elegant appellation, when, as Kincaid recounts—

the celebrated D.M. of the guards, rode up to a group of staff officers, and demanded if any of them had seen Beau Douro this morning? His Lordship, who was there reclining on the ground in his boat cloak, started up, and said, "Well! by —— I never knew I was a beau before!"¹

But in spite of his modesty, the title was by no means inappropriate from a physical as well as from a sartorial point of view.

Lord Wellington was then in the prime of life, a well made man, 5 foot 10 inches in height,* lean and muscular,

¹ *Kincaid, Random Shots, p. 198.*

* It seems to be the fashion to make the Duke out as a small man, and two novelists have even called him short (Lever in *Charles O'Malley* and Sabatini in *The Snare*).

Yet this was not the case. Those who knew him in his youth and in his prime speak of him as of middle, or slightly above middle height, and the Ladies of Llangollen called him tall.

Various guesses have been made of his height, from 5 ft. 8 in. to 5 ft. 10 in., but his actual height was 5 ft. 10 in.

In age, however, he appeared shorter owing to the natural shrinkage of the frame and a stoop from the neck due to a chronic contraction of the muscles through rheumatism.

W. H. Maxwell, who wrote of him during his lifetime, says that "In height he was nearly 5 ft. 10 inches; his shoulders were broad, his chest expansive . . . the whole frame-work evincing a capability of enduring the extremity of fatigue" (W. H. Maxwell, *Life of Wellington*, Vol. III, p. 522).

with broad shoulders and well-developed chest. Of the cruiser, rather than the battleship build, the greyhound, rather than the mastiff breed, he seemed made all for speed and action, yet strong as steel, and capable of great endurance.

The expression of his face in repose, it is said, was grave and almost stern; but the smile breaking through was a thing not easily to be forgotten, nor the loud cheery laugh or the mischievous twinkle in his eye when a good joke was abroad.

It was a strong virile face, with pronounced nose, and aquiline features, surmounted by a crop of crisp dark hair which showed a decided inclination to curl.

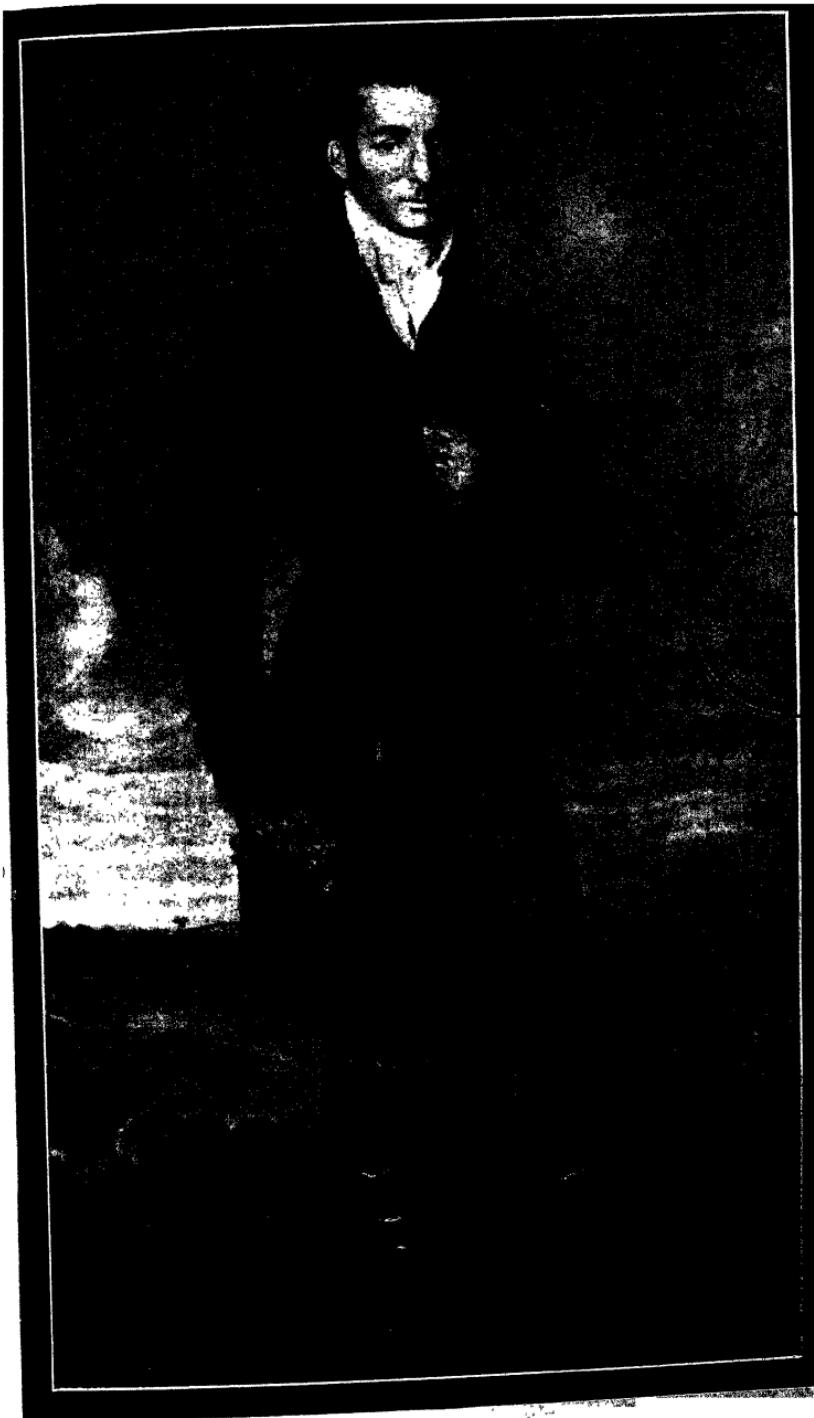
The eyes, a deep violet blue, were perhaps its most arresting feature; "full of fire" as they have so often been described, they were the mirror of his ardent spirit. On occasion they could be stern eyes, and an offender might well quail before them, but they could also be kind and tender eyes, and children never feared their glance.

They were sometimes tired eyes, when the burden of life pressed too heavily; and always they were eagle eyes, and seemed to embrace the universe in their sweeping, searching glance.

Looking at Arthur Wellesley at this period of his life one would have said that he expressed above all things, pent-up energy, or a great driving force, before which everything

Sherer, who constantly saw him, describes him as "a little above the middle height, well limbed and muscular; with little incumbrance of flesh beyond that which gives shape and manliness to the outline of the figure . . ." (Moyle Sherer, *Military Memoirs of the Duke of Wellington*, Vol. I, p. 50.)

"In height he measured about 5 feet 9 inches" says Gleig. Brialmont and Gleig, *Life of Wellington*, Vol. IV, p. 235, and again on another occasion Gleig describes him as "Rather above than below the middle size . . ." (Brialmont and Gleig, *Life of Wellington*, Vol. II, p. 356).



“BEAU DOURO”

must give way. He was like an eager hound straining at the leash, or a thoroughbred tossing its head, and champing at the bit, impatient to be let out to the full extent of its capacity.

Life is full of ups and downs, and no sooner was Arthur lifted up by the successful termination of the late campaign, than he was thrust down again by the disgrace of the escape of the garrison of Almeida, when 1,400 Frenchmen escaped under the noses of 13,000 Englishmen.

It happened on the night of May 10th, but it would never have happened at all if Lord Wellington's orders had been properly carried out.

Our generals, or whoever is in fault, ought to be shot [says Charles Napier]; the whole army is disgraced. Lord Wellington must feel it deeply. To have all his operations for securing the town against a large army succeed, to see that army defeated and retire, and then to have the generals under him let the garrison out! It is enough to break his heart.¹

And he did feel it sorely.

. . . I have never been so much distressed by any military event [he wrote Lord Liverpool] as by the escape of even a man of them . . . I certainly feel, every day, more and more [he continued wearily], the difficulty of the situation in which I am placed. I am obliged to be everywhere, and if absent from any operation, something goes wrong.²

The truth of the above remark was adequately illustrated on the day after it was written, when Marshal Beresford in the absence of his chief was fighting the hazardous and bloody Battle of Albuera, which went near to being a defeat, and cost so many lives.

It was the Almeida affair which prevented Lord Wellington from going to Beresford as soon as he had intended, and

¹ *Life of Sir Charles Napier, Vol. I, p. 173.*

² *Dispatches, Vol. VII, pp. 551, 552.*

whilst he was thus delayed, Soult at the head of a large force was marching to the relief of Badajoz.

Beresford's situation was critical. Should he fight or should he retire across the Guadiana? The responsibility lay upon his shoulders, and he did not like it.

An anxious letter from him sent Lord Wellington flying back south. Though always a lightning mover, this ride must have broken all his records. "He covered the distance (135 miles) in three days," says Schaumann, "but as he could find no relays for his horse, he rode two to death in accomplishing the journey."¹

In spite of his speed, however, he was too late, and on arrival at Elvas * on the 19th, was greeted with Beresford's despatch of the battle of the 16th, with its appalling casualty list.

His first thought was a kindly one for the Marshal.

Your loss, by all accounts, has been very large [he wrote], but I hope that it will not prove so large as was at first supposed. You could not be successful in such an action without a large loss, and we must make up our minds to affairs of this kind sometimes, or give up the game.²

Albuera, although a victory, failed to give satisfaction to the combatants.

No general [says Napier] ever gained so great a battle with so little increase of military reputation as Marshal Beresford. His personal intrepidity and strength . . . were conspicuously displayed, yet the breath of his own army withered his laurels . . . The battle should never have been fought ³ [states the historian decisively].

¹ Schaumann, p. 306.

² *Dispatches*, Vol. VII, p. 558.

³ Napier, Vol. III, p. 175, 179.

* A fortress of the second order on the frontier between Spain and Portugal, near Badajoz. It was of great importance as it was the base for the army in these parts, containing the hospitals, stores, ammunition, provisions, etc.

Poor Beresford himself was also of the same opinion.

I feel much for the number we have lost [he wrote in reply to his Chief's kindly letter] and I thank you for what you state ; but I freely confess to you I can scarcely forgive myself for risking this battle, and I as freely confess that it was very unwise, and I am convinced I ought not to have done it : at the same time there were strong reasons for not retiring across the Guadiana ; but the more I reflect upon the balance of good or evil from success or defeat, the more I am convinced the battle ought not to have been risked. I certainly risked all that you had been so long in gaining, and I cannot tell you how much that consideration oppressed me till all was safe.¹

The casualties at Albuera, of which by far the greatest part were British, were indeed terrible. "Oh, old 29th, I am sorry to see so many of you here !" Lord Wellington is said to have exclaimed whilst visiting his hospitals at Elvas. To which the men replied : "Oh, my lord, if you had only been with us, there would not have been so many of us here !" ²

Echoes of French censure of the conduct of the battle came through an escaped English prisoner, who had been interviewed by Soult. "Well, what did the French General say to you, my lad ?" Lord Wellington is reported to have said as he questioned the soldier on his return, Marshal Beresford being also present at the interview. "Sir, he only wanted to know if the English General who commanded the day of the battle was hanged yet," was the naïve reply.³

The person, however, from whom censure might reasonably be expected, forbore to censure, and instead threw a mantle of protection over his distressed subordinate.

I think it very desirable [wrote Lord Wellington to Mr. Stuart] that if possible, no flying details of the battle of Albuera should go home till Sir William Beresford's report shall be sent . . . where there are many killed and wounded, the first reports are not favourable, and it

¹ *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. VII, p. 134.

² *Peninsular Sketches*, Vol. II, p. 331.

³ *Malnesbury Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 229.

is not doing justice to the Marshal to allow them to circulate without his.¹

But then Arthur was never one for crying over spilt milk. "The late action", he observes in a letter to Colonel Torrens, "has made a terrible hole in our ranks; but I am working hard to set all to rights again."²

It was thus that Lord Wellington was able to show his gratitude to one who had remained true to him through thick and thin. For, if Beresford did not shine as a commander in the field, he was at least loyal to his Chief and upheld his authority, qualities all too rare amongst the Generals of Lord Wellington's army at that period. For besides 'croakers', the Commander-in-Chief had also to contend with a definite hostility of which Major-General Sir Charles Stewart * appears to have been the instigator;

... He intrigued in the army against me [said the Duke in after years], and with the assistance of Robert Crawfurd [sic], had turned every one of the general officers against me, except Lord Beresford, who, like a good soldier and honest fellow as he is, discountenanced all these petty intrigues.³

Soon after Albuera, Lord Wellington decided to throw a dice with Time, and make another attempt upon Badajoz. But it was Time who won the throw, and on June 10th he was forced to raise the siege, for Marmont † from the north and Soult from the south were marching upon Estremadura.

Not to be outdone, however, the English General threw

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. VII, p. 564.

² *Ibid.*, p. 569.

³ *Croker Papers*, Vol. I, p. 320.

* Stewart, Charles William, Lieut.-General, 3rd Marquess of Londonderry, 1778-1854. Only son of Robert Stewart, 1st Marquess, by his second wife, Frances (eldest daughter of Charles Pratt, 1st Earl Camden), and half-brother to Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh and 2nd Marquess of Londonderry, who was Secretary of State for War at the opening of the Peninsular Campaign.

† Marmont, Auguste Frederic Louis Viesse, Marshal, Duc de Raguse (Empire title). Born 1774.

again, and endeavoured to force Soult to battle before he could be joined by Marmont. But the wily Soult was not to be drawn, and the junction of the two French armies being inevitable, Lord Wellington took his troops across the Guadiana, and placing them in position along the banks of the Caya, prepared to bluff it out.

He was in a tight corner, for "the British troops had so many sick and wounded that only twenty-eight thousand sabres and bayonets were in line . . ." ¹ whereas the French combined forces numbered over sixty thousand, seven thousand of which were cavalry, and ninety guns. "Matters are in a very critical state just now," wrote Arthur to his brother Henry, on June 21st, "but I think I shall carry them through." ²

Nevertheless, for a few days the fate of the Peninsula hung in the balance.

The Allied army, however, were in blissful ignorance of their danger.

We were there [says Kincaid] . . . in as desperate a position as any that Lord Wellington had held during the war; yet I am free to say, however, that none of us knew anything at all about the matter, and cared still less. We there held, as we ever did, the most unbounded confidence in our chief . . . ³

A battle was hourly expected. Nothing, however, transpired, for after making a strong reconnaissance towards the Allied position, and failing to find out its weakness, the French Generals deemed discretion to be the better part of valour, and withdrew.

The moment of crisis had passed, that moment described by Napier as "one of the most dangerous of the whole war". ⁴ Its danger was averted, under Providence, only by a piece of courageous bluff, backed by a calm and steadfast mind.

So little perturbed, too, was that master mind by the

¹ Napier, Vol. III, p. 316.

² Dispatches, Vol. VIII, p. 40.

³ Kincaid, *Random Shots*, p. 226.

⁴ Napier, Vol. III, p. 315.

strain of the recent situation that immediately afterwards we find it able to detach itself from affairs on the spot, and focus upon the troubles of a love-sick young lady in England, on whose behalf a mutual friend had written to the Commander-in-Chief.

The letter produced one of Lord Wellington's most whimsical replies.

... It is impossible [he writes] not to feel for the unhappiness of the young lady, which you have so well described ; but it is not so easy as you imagine to apply the remedy.

It appears to me that I should be guilty of a breach of discretion if I were to send for the fortunate object of this young lady's affections, and to apprise him of the pressing necessity of his early return to England : the application for permission to go ought to come from himself ; and, at all events, the offer ought not to be made by me, and particularly not founded on the secret of this interesting young lady.

But this fortunate Major now commands his battalion, and I am very apprehensive that he could not with propriety quit it at present, even though the life of this female should depend upon it ; and therefore, I think that he will not ask for leave.

We read, occasionally, of desperate cases of this description, but I cannot say that I have ever yet known of a young lady dying of love. They contrive, in some manner, to live, and look tolerably well, notwithstanding their despair and the continued absence of their lover ; and some even have been known to recover so far as to be inclined to take another lover, if the absence of the first has lasted too long. I dont suppose that your protégée can ever recover so far, but I do hope that she will survive the continued necessary absence of the Major, and enjoy with him hereafter many happy days.¹*

Soult and Marmont hung about for another month, without however, attempting anything further against the Allies ; after which they separated and left the district.

Their separation was the signal for Lord Wellington to move, and the Allied army (with the exception of a force

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VII, pp. 171, 172.*

* " This officer afterwards married the young lady. He returned to the army, and was mortally wounded at the battle of Vitoria " [1813]. *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VII, p. 172, footnote.*

of 14,000 under Hill, left in the Alentejo) trekked back to its old positions on the Portuguese frontier, headquarters being established at Fuente Guinaldo, just within the Spanish border.

Lord Wellington now resumed the blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo.

His situation was much the same as the one he had just quitted, with Ciudad Rodrigo, instead of Badajoz, as the bone of contention.

Soon Marmont, greatly reinforced, reappeared upon the scenes, forced Lord Wellington to raise the blockade, and on September 25th fell upon his centre on the heights of El Bodon.

A short and bloody conflict ensued, and though the allied troops fought superbly, they were forced to retire upon Fuente Guinaldo.

On the morning of the 26th, Marmont followed up his victory, and appeared in force before that place, which Lord Wellington held with the centre of his army only, not having yet been joined by the wings. But in spite of his desperate situation he refused to budge, for his Light Division was in a post of danger, and he would not leave it to its fate.

Matters once again looked their blackest for the Allied cause; on the one hand 14,000 gallant men and a dauntless leader, on the other 60,000 of the matchless fighters of France.

Yet for all that the balance was equal, for Fortune laid her hand upon the lighter scale; and Marmont, deceived as to the real weakness of Lord Wellington's situation, and as if bewitched, forebore to attack, and instead spent the day in manoeuvring his troops upon the plain. And whilst he juggled with Fate, the Light Division was marching into safety.

Meanwhile [says Sherer] the English soldiers piled their arms, and Lord Wellington sat cool and quiet on the ground.

It was at this moment that a Spanish general . . . observed to him, "Why, here you are with a couple of weak divisions in front of the

whole French army, and you seem quite at your ease;—why, it is enough to put any man in a fever."

"I have done, according to the very best of my judgement, all that can be done," said Wellington; "therefore I care not either for the enemy in front, or for anything which they may say at home."

Here [continues Sherer] was the golden secret of his calm unalterable demeanour. Duties were his, and he did them. Events were not his, and to the great Disposer of all he left them.¹

About three o'clock in the afternoon the Light Division arrived and Lord Wellington was free to move. That night there was a great show of bivouac fires in the Allied camp, under cover of which the army stole quietly away and having been joined by its wings, was led by its Chief into a position of safety upon the Coa river, where it could only be attacked upon a narrow front.

Another crisis of the War was ended.

¹ Sherer, *Military Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 227.

Chapter Thirteen

BADAJOZ—CIUDAD RODRIGO

But if there be in glory ought of good
 It may by means far different be attained
 Without ambition, war or violence
 By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent
 By patience, temperance . . .

MILTON.

IN the autumn of 1811 'Wellington shares' were not fetching so high a price in the home market as they had in the previous spring; they were showing no dividends, it was at least five months since a victory had been forthcoming;

. . . People here [wrote a Colonel home on leave] look at a map, and then say what Ld. Wellington ought to do, and if the next dispatches are not ushered in by the Tower guns and a swinging list of kill'd and wounded, fancy that nothing's done; and a poor General, who has toil'd night and day for Months together to Baffle a superior force, checks, harasses them, and retires in good order *in their teeth*, gets no more thanks than if he had been beaten.¹

The newspapers, too, were having a dig at the General-on-the-spot, and with civilian effrontery criticizing his conduct of the campaign.

I am out of all patience with the Morning Chronicle [writes Lord Granville to Lady Bessborough], it grows more pitifully malignant and presumptuous than ever, and seems totally to forget that Lord Wellington's instructions were to defend Portugal. Has he or has he not succeeded in that object?²

¹ *Leveson Gower, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 408.*

² *Ibid.*

I had not happen'd to see the Morning Chronicle that made you so angry [wrote Lady Bessborough in reply], but Frederick* met with it at Guildford, and brought it back to me with the greatest indignation.¹

Hostile criticism, however, was not entirely confined to newspapers, and Lady Bessborough and her son were further incensed.

at hearing of young Bouverie † joining in running down Ld. Wellington, from whom he has receiv'd personal kindness of every sort, and quietly hoping that the French would put an end to all our *disgraces* by driving our army into their ships and sending them home, which they might have done long ago if Buonaparte's orders had not prevented it, as he preferr'd wasting our Money and making us ridiculous to giving us a proper dressing, etc.—this from a man who calls himself a British officer ² [adds Lady Bessborough in disgust].

The army on the spot were now settled down in their winter quarters, the usual relaxation and recreation being indulged in whenever possible. "As the winter approached", says Harry Smith; "We had private theatricals . . . horse races, greyhound matches, etc.,"⁸—besides which fox-hunting, the Commander-in-Chief's favourite sport, was in full swing. "At Fuente Guinaldo", says Captain Bowles, "they have a regular pack of foxhounds, and have already knocked up about half the horses of the staff . . . Lord

¹ *Leveson Gower, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 410.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 422. ³ *Sir Harry Smith*, Vol. I, p. 55.

* Lady Bessborough's second son, Col. the Hon. Frederick Cavendish Ponsonby, afterwards Major-General Sir F. C. Ponsonby, 1783-1837. He was a great favourite with Lord Wellington, and was considered one of his best out-post officers.

† Bourvierie, afterwards Sir Henry Frederick, General, 1783-1852. Gazetted Ensign in the Coldstream Guards 1799. In 1809 A.D.C. to Lord Wellington in Portugal. Acted for a short time as Military Secretary to him. He was a kinsman of that red-hot Whig, William Pleydell Bourvierie, one of the foremost leaders of the opposition. This possibly accounts for his having 'bit the hand that fed him'.

‡ Sir George Bowles, 1787-1876. Major-General. Then Captain in the Coldstream Guards, and serving under Wellington in the Peninsula.

Wellington rides so hard that I suppose he will meet with an accident . . . some day or other.”¹

“Lord Wellington got a tumble two days ago”, wrote the same correspondent a month later, “and hurt himself a little. He will certainly break his neck someday.”²

But unless he did so, he was in no particular danger for the moment, and Kitty in England should have been able to sleep peacefully.

Her anxiety that autumn, however, was shifted from big to little Arthur, who became dangerously ill, and something of what she went through at that time peeps out in one of her effusive letters to the great Richard.

I have just received from William Pole [she writes on November 10th] a letter from you written at the moment the situation of my child was most desperate, never Lord Wellesley, never while I live can I forget the kindness of feeling which dictated that letter. I will ever preserve it. On this subject I am not able to dwell.

My boy is almost miraculously preserved, and his dear and excellent father will I trust receive the intelligence of his recovery almost as soon as that of his danger.³

This seems to have been the case, though had it been otherwise, being only a man, big Arthur could never have felt as Kitty did about it. Besides, his life was not his own, he served the world, and private joys or griefs were always made subservient to that service. Nevertheless, we do find him on December 18th, writing to the friendly Liverpool that, “I am very much obliged to your Lordship for your kindness to my little boy.”⁴ And on January 7th to Dr. Frank* that, “I am very much obliged to you for your account of my little boy, and for your kindness in going to see him.”⁵

¹ *Malmesbury, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 234.*

² *Ibid., p. 240.*

³ *British Museum Add. MS. 37315, folio 141.*

⁴ *Dispatches, Vol. VIII, p. 457.* ⁵ *Ibid., p. 513.*

* Dr. Frank had been chief of the Medical Staff in the Peninsula, but had gone home on account of illness.

For some time past the project uppermost in Lord Wellington's mind had been the possession of Ciudad Rodrigo, and, all unbeknown to his army, preparations to lay siege to the place had been quietly going forward, waiting only for the right moment to put them into execution. It came in the month of January 1812, when the attention of Marmont and Soult respectively being attracted in other directions, "Wellington instantly jumped with both feet upon the devoted fortress."¹

The siege opened on January 8th with great gusto, and on that same night the redoubt of San Francisco in the outwork was stormed and taken.

As soon as the fort fell, Colonel Colborne,* who was in charge of the storming party, sent a soldier with the news to Lord Wellington, who received it in characteristic fashion. "I've taken the fort, Sir," said the soldier, running up in great excitement. "Oh, you've taken the fort, have you?" replied the Commander-in-Chief. "Well, I'm glad to hear it . . ."²—Then he mounted his horse and rode away.

Eleven days later Ciudad Rodrigo was in the Allies' hands. It had been a short snappy affair, and had taken Lord Wellington but twelve days from start to finish, as against Massena's twenty-eight in April of 1810.

There is nothing in this life half so enviable [observes Kincaid, when the siege was ended], as the feelings of a soldier after a victory . . . It had ever been the summit of my ambition to attain a post at the head of a storming party;—my wish had now been accomplished, and gloriously ended; and I do think that after all was over . . . that I strutted about, as important a personage, in my own opinion, as ever trod the face of the earth; and had the ghost of the renowned Jack-the-giant-killer itself passed that way at the time, I'll venture to say,

¹ *Napier, Vol. IV, p. 82.*

² *Life of Lord Seaton, p. 272.*

* Colborne, Sir John, 1st Baron Seaton, General, 1778–1863. In command of the 52nd during most of the Peninsular War, and at Waterloo. Created Field-Marshal 1860.

that I would have given it a kick in the breech without the smallest ceremony.¹

Perhaps it was this kind of feeling that also possessed the besieging troops, only unfortunately it was not expressed in so harmless a manner, and that same young officer who had been crowing over the victory, was shortly to be lamenting the outrages committed by the erstwhile gallant soldiers.

The moment [says he] which is the most dangerous to the honour and safety of a British army is that in which they have won the place they have assaulted.* While outside the walls, and linked together by the magic hand of discipline, they are heroes—but once they have forced themselves inside they become demons or lunatics—for it is difficult to tell which spirit predominates.

To see the two storming divisions assembled in the great square that night, mixed up in a confused mass, shooting at each other, and firing in at different doors and windows, without the shadow of a reason, was enough to drive anyone, who was in possession of his senses, mad. . . . After calling, and shouting, until I was hoarse in endeavouring to restore order, and when my voice was no longer audible, seeing a soldier raising his piece to fire at a window, I came across his shoulders with a musket-barrel . . . and demanded, “What the devil, sir, are you firing at?” to which he answered, “I don’t know, sir! I am firing because everybody else is!”²

To restore order [says another officer] was impossible; a whole division could not have done it. Three or four large houses were on fire . . . and the town was illuminated by the flames. The soldiers

¹ *Kincaid Adventures*, pp. 58, 59.

² *Kincaid, Random Shots*, pp. 261, 262.

* It must be remembered that in those days, and from time immemorial, the plundering of a city taken by assault was held to be the privilege of the storming soldiers. They were disobeying no military law in so doing. Until this barbarous practice was legislated against even such a disciplinarian as Lord Wellington could do nothing to prevent it, for the soldiers were only acting within their rights. It was, of course, abominated by him, and by all the officers of the army, who did their best to control the men, and Lord Wellington curtailed the time of license as much as possible. The besieged city had always the alternative of surrender, which would have entitled them to protection, and *plunder* would then have been illegal.

were drunk, and many of them for amusement were firing from the windows into the streets. I was myself talking to the barber Evans in the square, when a ball passed through his head . . . He fell at my feet dead, and his brains lay on the pavement . . . if I had not seen, I never could have supposed that British soldiers would become so wild and furious.¹

The Allied losses during the siege amounted to about 1,200, amongst whom was General Craufurd, the commander of the famous Light Division,* who received a mortal wound from which he died a few days later. He was buried at the breach where he fell, Lord Wellington, and all the officers of the Light Division attending his funeral.

So passed the gallant, turbulent Craufurd, and with him went one of the few competent generals of Lord Wellington's army. Wayward and intractable as he had often been, his Chief had known his worth, and was always ready to overlook his delinquencies, extending his forbearance even to that disloyalty towards himself of which Craufurd, in company with other general officers, had been guilty, and for which, before his passing, he begged his Commander's forgiveness.

Poor Crawfurd [sic] [said the Duke in after years], was a dissatisfied troublesome man, who fell quite naturally into this sort of intrigue, and I believe he pushed it to a very blameable extent, for when he was mortally wounded, he sent for me, and there in the way one has read of in romances, he solemnly asked my forgiveness for injuries . . . which he had done or endeavoured to do me.²

There was of course the inevitable Napier amongst the casualties, which produced the inevitable kindly letter to the Napier's mother, from the Napier's Chief.

It was George Napier of the 52nd who upheld the family

¹ *Peninsular Sketches*, Vol. I, p. 260.

² *Croker Papers*, Vol. I, p. 320.

* The Light Division consisted of the 95th, the 43rd and 52nd Regiments and a Portuguese regiment of Caçadores. It had a great reputation and was one of the finest, if not the finest division in Lord Wellington's Peninsular Army. It owed its perfection in a great part to the somewhat drastic training it received under General Craufurd, who, in spite of his rigorous discipline, was adored by his men.

tradition on this occasion, having received a wound which necessitated the amputation of his right arm.

... Staff Surgeon Guthrie cut it off [says he]. However, for want of light, and from the number of amputations he had already performed, and other circumstances, his instruments were blunted, so it was a long time before the thing was finished, at least twenty minutes, and the pain was great.¹

Major Napier's convalescence was greatly cheered by Lord Wellington's kindness, for in spite of the wounded man being moved thirteen miles from Ciudad Rodrigo, the Commander-in-Chief found time to visit him.

... What most contributed to my recovery [says the grateful George] was a visit from Lord Wellington, who brought me the English newspapers ; told me my battalion . . . was ordered home and that I should go also and see my mother ; that he was highly pleased with my conduct, and had in consequence recommended me for the medal which would be struck upon the occasion, and also for the rank of lieutenant-colonel . . . I thanked him for all his kindness, and he then took his leave, but often repeated his visits as long as I remained near him . . .²

Lord Wellington's wounded were always his most pre-occupying consideration, and his anxiety concerning them was accentuated at this period by the fact that he was without a chief of medical staff. It was therefore a great relief to him when James McGrigor, who was sent out in that capacity, arrived upon the scenes.

McGrigor, who had known his present chief, as Colonel Wellesley in Bombay, during the preparations for the Red Sea Expedition—brought with him echoes of Indian days. It was a far cry, however, from Bombay to Spain and Portugal—from a disappointed young Colonel with his Malabar itch, and nitrous baths, to the splendid omnipotent being who now reigned supreme at headquarters of the Allied army. Yet there was nothing particularly awe-inspiring about the cheery personage who came in from the hunting field to greet McGrigor on his arrival.

¹ Sir George Napier, p. 219.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 229, 230.

He received me most kindly [says the doctor], recollected immediately our having met in Bombay, and thereupon in the midst of a large party assembled in the dining room . . . asked me if I had met my old regiment the 88th or Connaught Rangers on my route. On my replying that I had not, he laughingly said, "I hope from your long living with them you have not contracted any of their leading propensities, for I hang and shoot more of your old friends for murders robberies etc. than I do of all the rest of the army." The laughter of the whole party [continues the doctor] was loud. At this I felt somewhat abashed; which Lord Wellington observing he continued—"One thing I will tell you however; whenever anything very gallant is to be done, there is no corps in the army I would sooner employ than your old friends the Connaught Rangers."¹

The Commander-in-Chief was as free from red tape in business hours as in society, and McGrigor was ordered to present his daily reports in person. The officers of the Staff, however, had other ideas, and on his arrival the second morning, an attempt was made by the Adjutant-General to transact his business for him, and to prevent him reaching the Fountain-Head.

I replied [said the doctor] that I preferred doing business direct with Lord Wellington, and that it was by his lordship's desire I came there. At this moment the door of his little inner apartment was opened by Lord Wellington, who nodding to me desired me to come in.²

Nevertheless he had his little cranks and could not abide being waited on with a written paper; "he was fidgetty, and evidently displeased", says McGrigor, "when I referred to my notes. I therefore discontinued this and came to him daily having the heads of business arranged in my mind."³

Arthur was now getting weighted down with honours.

In September the Portuguese Government had made him Conde de Vimeiro, presented him with the Grand Cross of the Order of the Tower and Sword, and offered him a pension of 20,000 cruzados per annum. The money, as usual, he refused to accept, a generosity which is accentuated by the fact that his expenses were in excess of his earnings.

¹ *McGrigor*, p. 258.

² *Ibid.*, p. 261.

³ *Ibid.*

I have not much time to attend to my own affairs [he had written the Military Secretary in the beginning of the year 1812], and I do not know exactly how I stand with the world at present. The pay of Commander of the Forces, which is all that I receive in this country, does not defray my expenses here, while my family must be maintained in England . . .¹

Fate, however, took care of him, and after Ciudad Rodrigo the British Government gave him an annuity of £2,000, and created him Earl. Spain, too, did not forget him, and he was made Duque de Ciudad Rodrigo, and a Grandee of the first class.

He had had a step up in British military rank as well, having been promoted to the rank of full General, while serving in the Peninsula. Quite an important person now, the erstwhile family dunce !

Things were certainly looking brighter, and the tide of success appeared to be set once more in Arthur's direction ; and while it was still on the rise he determined to push on and take Badajoz.

Accordingly, on February 24th, the army commenced to trek south again, and by March 11th headquarters were established at Elvas.

In spite, however, of the brighter outlook, the burden of the campaign still pressed heavily upon Lord Wellington and the undercurrent of opposition and difficulty set ever against the tide of success. The Portuguese Government was as usual giving him anxiety, and of late had reduced him to a point of desperation. They gave him no support whatever, and enforced no obedience from those under contract to serve the British army. It was impossible to get anybody to do anything ; drivers of carts deserted, and transport, of which there should have been an abundance, was almost impossible to obtain. Lord Wellington was obliged to detach regiments to the rear to receive their clothing, because it was impossible to get it brought up to them ; "nothing can rouse these people

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. IX, p. 3.*

to a sense of their duty ", he wrote in desperation on February 4th, " I shall not stay much longer." ¹

In contrast to the delinquencies of Portugal's Government was the gallantry and prowess of Portugal's soldiers who had now become one of the most valuable assets to the Allied cause, were deemed worthy to form a part of the famous Light Division, and eventually won from Lord Wellington the title of ' Fighting Cocks of the Army '.

Just before the commencement of the siege of Badajoz the Commander-in-Chief at last gave out, and was for two days on the sick list, which is hardly a matter of surprise.

The responsibility even in small matters [says Napier] became too great for subordinate officers—the English general was forced to arrange the most trifling details of the service himself, and his iron strength of body and mind were strained, until all men wondered how they held . . . ²

Yet in spite of the strain his courage was high, and he was filled with that confidence which annihilates defeat.

His troops also shared his confidence. " The soldiers swear we shall succeed ", he wrote his brother Richard, " because we invested on St. Patrick's eve, and broke ground on St. Patrick's day." ³

It began badly, however,

for [says Kincaid] we had scarcely taken up our ground, when a heavy rain commenced, and continued, almost without intermission, for a fortnight; in consequence thereof, the pontoon-bridge, connecting with our supplies from Elvas, was carried away, by the rapid increase of the river, and the duties of the trenches were otherwise rendered extremely harassing . . . we never were dry the whole time. ⁴

By the night of April 6th everything was ready for the final act, and the assault timed to take place at ten o'clock. At that hour the rain had stopped, but the night, though dry, was cloudy. The fire of both sides had now entirely ceased, and " a death-like silence, of nearly an hour, preceded the

¹ *Despatches*, Vol. VIII, p. 559.

² *Napier*, Vol. IV, p. 99.

³ *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. VII, p. 308.

⁴ *Kincaid, Adventures*, pp. 62, 63.

awful scene of carnage".¹ It was broken by the discharge of a French sentry's musket, followed by the roll of drums —then silence again for a few minutes, until the 'forlorn hope' came up and launched the attack.

"The scene that ensued", says Kincaid, "furnished as respectable a representation of hell itself as fire, and sword, and human sacrifices could make it; for, in one instant, every engine of destruction was in full operation."²

For five hours this scene continued, during most of which time Fortune seemed against the besiegers.

Now [says Napier] a multitude bounded up the great breach as if driven by a whirlwind, but across the top glittered a range of sword-blades, sharp-pointed, keen-edged on both sides, and firmly fixed in ponderous beams . . . and for ten feet in front the ascent was covered with loose planks studded with sharp iron points, on which feet being set the planks moved and the unhappy soldiers falling forward on the spikes rolled down upon the ranks behind. . . . Once and again the assailants rushed up the breaches, but always the sword-blades, immovable and impassable, stopped their charge, and the hissing shells and thundering powder-barrels exploded unceasingly. Hundreds of men had fallen, hundreds more were dropping, still the heroic officers called aloud for new trials, and sometimes followed by many sometimes by a few, ascended the ruins . . ."³

From a hillock near the main breach the Commander-of-the-Forces watched the terrible conflict, and received the unfavourable reports that were brought to him from time to time. To his vicinity came also, quietly and unobtrusively, yet all prepared, the Surgeon in Chief, for it was not unlikely that his services might be required in this direction.

The hours wore on, and though men were dying now in thousands, no headway had been made. Another bad report came up from the breaches; it seemed to spell defeat.

A light was brought; Lord Wellington took the paper and held it with a steady hand, and though he was pale and his countenance expressed great anxiety, "in his manner and

¹ Kincaid, *Adventures*, p. 65.

² *Ibid.*, p. 66.

³ Napier, Vol. IV, p. 227.

language he preserved perfect coolness and self-possession ".¹ But the flare of the torch lit up that white and anxious face, and McGrigor glancing up at the moment was startled at what he saw. ". . . I never shall forget it", says he, "to the last moment of my existence . . . The jaw had fallen, and the face was of unusual length, while the torchlight gave his countenance a lurid aspect; but still the expression of the face was firm."² The combat was not yet to be abandoned, and fresh dispositions were instantly made.

A few minutes later, however, a horseman was heard approaching, and as he galloped up the hill, "a voice called out harshly and loudly, 'Where is Lord Wellington' . . . 'My Lord, the Castle is your own.' "³

It was the beginning of the end. General Picton and the 3rd Division had taken the Castle, and the troops pouring in from thence were soon in possession of the town. Victory was once more wrested from defeat, and the blood-red jewel of Badajoz added to the Peninsular crown. But at what a cost! Five thousand men and officers had fallen, and the breach was now a bloody shambles.

Let it be considered [says Napier] that this frightful carnage took place in a space of less than a hundred yards square . . . that some perished by steel, some by shot, some by water, that some were crushed and mangled by heavy weights, some trampled upon, some dashed to atoms by the fiery explosions;—that for hours this destruction was endured without shrinking and the town was won at last. Let these things be considered and it must be admitted a British army bears with it an awful power. . . .⁴

When the extent of the night's havoc was made known to lord Wellington the firmness of his nature gave way for a moment, and the pride of conquest yielded to a passionate burst of grief for the loss of his gallant soldiers.⁵

And the aftermath—that which brought shame upon the British army, and stained the glory of their heroic achievement—

¹ *Peninsular Sketches*, Vol. I, p. 305.

² *McGrigor*, p. 272.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Napier*, Vol. IV, pp. 122, 123.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

In a little time [says Surgeon McGrigor] the whole of the soldiers appeared to be in a state of mad drunkenness. In every street and in every corner we met them forcing their way like furies into houses, firing through the keyholes of the doors so as to force the locks, or at any person they saw at a window imploring mercy. In passing some houses which they had entered we heard the shrieks of females . . .

In one street I met General Phillippon, the governor, with his two daughters, holding each other by the hand ; all three with their hair dishevelled, and with them were two British officers, each holding one of the ladies by the arm, and with their drawn swords making thrusts occasionally at soldiers who attempted to drag the ladies away . . .

I am glad to say [continues McGrigor] that these two British officers succeeded in conveying the governor and his daughters safely through the breach to the camp.¹

Shameless rapacity, brutal intemperance, savage lust, cruelty and murder, shrieks and piteous lamentations, groans, shouts, imprecations, the hissing of fires bursting from the houses, the crashing of doors and windows, and the reports of muskets used in violence, resounded for two days and nights in the streets of Badajos ! On the third, when the city was sacked, when the soldiers were exhausted by their own excesses, the tumult rather subsided than was quelled. . . .²

On the third day, too, Lord Wellington, unable to stand it any longer, ordered the Provost Marshal into the town, and a gallows was erected in the Square, the sight of which subdued the last flickerings of the debauchers' ardour.

But as a lovely flower may grow in a noisome swamp, so from the bestial horror of Badajoz grew the love-story of Harry and Juanita Smith, which runs like a golden thread of beauty through the latter half of the Peninsular Campaign.

It began on the day following the storm of Badajoz, and happened thus :

I was conversing with a friend the day after, at the door of his tent [says Johnny Kincaid *], when we observed two ladies coming from the city, who made directly towards us ; they seemed both young, and

¹ *McGrigor*, pp. 275, 276.

² *Napier*, Vol. IV, p. 122.

* Sir John Kincaid, 1787-1862. Then a lieutenant in the 95th, which formed part of the famous Light Division. Author of *Random Shots of a Rifleman* and *Adventures in the Rifle Brigade*.

when they came near, the elder of the two . . . at once addressed us in that confident heroic manner so characteristic of the high bred Spanish maiden, told us who they were, the last of an ancient and honourable house. . . .

Her husband, she said, was a Spanish officer in a distant part of the kingdom ; he might or he might not still be living. But yesterday, she and this her young sister were able to live in affluence and in a handsome house—to-day, they knew not where to lay their heads—where to get a change of raiment or a morsel of bread. Her house, she said, was a wreck, and to shew the indignities to which they had been subjected, she pointed to where the blood was still trickling down their necks, caused by the wrenching of their earrings through the flesh, by the hands of worse than savages who would not take the trouble to unclasp them !

For herself, she said, she cared not ; but for the agitated and almost unconscious maiden by her side . . . she was in despair, and knew not what to do ; and that in the rapine and ruin which was at that moment desolating the city, she saw no security for her but the seemingly indelicate one she had adopted, of coming to the camp and throwing themselves upon the protection of any British officer who would afford it ; and so great, she said, was her faith in our national character, that she knew the appeal would not be made in vain, nor the confidence abused. Nor was it made in vain, nor could it be abused [continues the enthusiastic narrator], for she stood by the side of an angel ! * A being more transcendantly lovely I had never before seen . . . to look at her was to love her—and I did love her ; but I never told my love, and in the meantime another, and a more impudent fellow stepped in and won her ! ¹

I confess myself to be the “ more impudent fellow ” [writes Sir Harry Smith,† in his biography, thirty-three years later], and if any reward is

¹ *Kincaid, Random Shots, pp. 292, 295.*

* Juana Maria de Los Dolores de Leon. A member of one of the oldest Spanish families.

She was in three sieges of Badajoz, in one of which her wounded brother died in her arms. She had only just finished her education at a convent when the last siege took place, and was but fourteen years old at the time of her marriage. Also referred to as Juanita.

† Sir Harry George Wakelyn Smith, Bart., Lieut.-General, 1788–1860.

One of the most fascinating characters of the Peninsular War, efficient, dashing, and fearless, he was the beau ideal of the perfect soldier.

Served in the famous Light Division in the Peninsula. Had a long and distinguished military career. Served in South Africa from 1829

due to a soldier, never was one so honoured and distinguished as I have been by the possession of this dear child . . . From that day to this she has been my guardian angel. She has shared with me the dangers and privations, the hardships and fatigues, of a restless life of war in every quarter of the globe. No murmur has ever escaped her. Bereft of every relative, and of every tie to her country but the recollection of it, united to a man of different though Christian religion, yet that man has been and is her all . . .¹

There was something divinely fateful in this romantic bethrothal, for what else but the hand of Destiny could out of a whole camp have led Juanita to her rightful mate?

For there was never any question about it, and they settled down immediately to their happy married life; neither was there any overhanging cloud of separation to mar this strange honeymoon, for the young wife followed her husband throughout the campaign.

¹ *Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, pp. 71, 72.*

to 1834, where he did great service in the Kaffir War, and was placed in command of the new Province of Queen Adelaide, capital King William's Town.

In 1840 went to India as Deputy Adjutant-General of the Army in India. Served brilliantly in the First Sikh War. Was given a separate command and immortalized himself by winning the famous battle of Aliwal, January 28th, 1846.

Went to South Africa again in 1847 as Governor of the Cape of Good Hope. Returned to England 1852, and was present at the last Waterloo Banquet when the Duke himself proposed his health.

He became personally acquainted with Wellington when a young officer serving in the Peninsula and conceived for him a love and worship which was the great inspiration of his life.

The towns of Harrismith, Aliwal North, and Ladysmith in South Africa, take their names from Sir Harry and his wonderful wife.

Chapter Fourteen

SALAMANCA—HEIGHTS AND DEPTHS

Every failure is a step advanced
 To him who will consider how it chanced.
 GEORGE MEREDITH.

A FEW days after the fall of Badajoz Lord Wellington retraced his steps north where Marmont was blockading Ciudad Rodrigo.

On his way thither he stopped at Elvas to see his Badajoz wounded. "I accompanied him", says surgeon McGrigor, "on a visit to the principal hospitals . . . and in going round he spoke kindly to many of the poor fellows as I pointed out their cases to him . . ." ¹

Leaving Elvas, Lord Wellington continued his journey north; and as he advanced, Marmont retired from before Ciudad Rodrigo.

With the important frontier fortresses of Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo in his hands, the aspect of the war had changed for Lord Wellington, and he now determined to take the offensive, and bring Marmont to a general action.

He was in high spirits with regard to this undertaking,

. . . I believe there is no man in this army who entertains a doubt of its result [he wrote Lord Liverpool], and that sentiment alone would do a great deal to obtain success. But we possess solid physical advantages over the enemy, besides those resulting from recent successes.

¹ *McGrigor*, p. 282.

Our infantry are not in bad order; our cavalry more numerous in relation to the enemy, and the horses in better condition than I have known them since I have commanded the army . . .¹

There was, however, one fly in the ointment which was likely to ruin all his prospects—that pernicious gnat impecuniosity, whose buzzing was hardly ever silenced.

The British army have not been paid for nearly three months [laments the Commander-in-Chief on May 6th]; we owe nearly a year's hire to the muleteers of the army; and we are in debt for supplies in all parts of the country . . .²

I have never been in such distress as at present [he bewails two months later], and some serious misfortune must happen if the Government do not attend seriously to the subject, and adopt some measures to supply us regularly with money . . . As it is, if we do not find means of paying our bills for butcher's meat, there will be an end to the war at once.³

In the middle of June Lord Wellington launched his great offensive, and commenced those operations against Marmont known as the Salamanca Campaign, which, lasting for several weeks, were to terminate in a brilliant Allied victory.

On Lord Wellington's advance, Marmont evacuated Salamanca, which on June 17th was taken possession of by the Allies amidst the acclamations of its joyful citizens.

The inhabitants [says a British cavalry officer] were out of their senses at having got rid of the French, and nearly pulled Lord Wellington off his horse . . . The women were the most violent, many coming up . . . and embracing him. He was writing orders on his sabretach, and was interrupted three or four times by them.⁴

It was difficult to bring Marmont to a general action, for he retired across the Duero,* where he placed himself in a strong position, with the river between himself and his opponent.

In this situation the rival armies remained for several days.

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. IX, pp. 176, 177.*

² *Ibid., p. 125.*

³ *Ibid., p. 290.*

⁴ *Tomkinson, p. 162.*

* The Dôuro becomes the Duero in Spain.

It appears certain [wrote the British commander on July 3rd] that Marmont will not risk an action unless he should have an advantage; and I shall certainly not risk one unless I should have an advantage; and matters therefore do not appear likely to be brought to that criterion very soon.¹

The relations of the combatants were as always in off moments, entirely friendly.

. . . On both sides [says Napier] the soldiers, entering the river to bathe, held amicable intercourse, rallying each other about the battles yet to be fought, and the camps on the banks of the Duero seemed at times to belong to one army: so difficult is it to make brave men hate each other.²

This state of affairs continued until July 17th, when Marmont, who had received reinforcements, could restrain himself no longer, and crossing the Duero commenced that offensive which was to end in his defeat.

But it began very much to his advantage, and the early hours of the 18th nearly yielded him the person of the English Commander, the story of whose narrow escape is graphically recorded by Kincaid.

I was sent on piquet on the evening of the 17th [says he] . . . and, soon after sunrise on the following morning, a cannonade commenced . . . While I was attentively watching its progress, there arose, all at once, behind the rising ground to my left, a yell of the most terrific import . . . and, seeing a broad deep ditch within a hundred yards, I lost not a moment in placing it between my piquet and the extraordinary sound. I had scarcely effected the movement, when Lord Wellington, with his staff, and a cloud of French and English dragoons and horse artillery intermixed, came over the hill at full cry, and all hammering at each others' heads in one confused mass over the ground I had that instant quitted. It appeared that his Lordship had gone there to reconnoitre, covered by two guns and two squadrons of cavalry, who, by some accident, were surprised, and charged by a superior body of the enemy, and sent tumbling in upon us, in the manner described.³

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. IX, p. 270.

² *Napier*, Vol. IV, p. 249. ³ *Kincaid, Adventures*, pp. 77, 78.

The Commander-in-Chief appears to have secretly enjoyed the fun, for though in his official capacity "he did not look more than half pleased"¹ yet an officer who witnessed the beginning of the affair, saw him cross a ford, "with his straight sword drawn, at full speed, and smiling"².

Marmont's star was now in the ascendant, and, for the next three days, the Allies were driven steadily back, until July 21st found them across the River Tormes, and drawn up in battle order in front of Salamanca.

Things were looking black for Lord Wellington now, and his 'Castles in Spain' were rocking and beginning to totter; it seemed as if he would have to abandon them and creep back to Portugal again. Reinforcements were pouring into Marmont from all sides; there appeared to be no chance of fighting a successful action, and the British General dared not risk a defeat. "I have therefore determined", he wrote Lord Bathurst* on July 21st, ". . . to cover Salamanca as long as I can; and above all, not to give up our communication with Ciudad Rodrigo. . . ."³

Not a very enlivening prospect after the high hopes with which he had started the campaign.

That night a thunderstorm, sure portent of a Wellington victory, burst over Salamanca. Was it the voice of Jove booming out assurance to his gallant son?

The next day, too, was a Sunday, always a lucky day for the British Commander; sixteen Sundays ago at Badajoz, victory had been torn from defeat. What would this Sunday bring forth?

The day dawned bright and serene, a day of calm after a night of storm. In the Allied camp the army was busily engaged in drying itself, and whilst it scrubbed and polished, Harry Smith's little Spanish wife, mounted for the first time

¹ *Kincaid, Adventures*, p. 78.

² *Peninsular Sketches*, Vol. I, p. 332.

³ *Dispatches*, Vol. IX, p. 299.

* Now Secretary of State for War, in succession to Lord Liverpool, who had become Prime Minister.

on her husband's thoroughbred Andalusian charger, rode him proudly about amongst the delighted soldiers.

But about ten o'clock the Light Division was ordered to stand to their arms, and Juanita to her great annoyance was banished to the rear where, "in the thunder of cannon, the pride of equestrianism was buried in anxiety for him on whom her all depended".¹

The British army before the action was champing at the bit.

The retreat of the four preceding days [says Kincaid] had annoyed us beyond measure, for we believed that we were nearly equal to the enemy in point of numbers; and the idea of our retiring before an equal number of any troops in the world was not to be endured with common patience.²

Nevertheless their patience was called into play during the first hours of this memorable day, whilst their Chief with consummate calm watched his rival manoeuvring to attack; for Lord Wellington had no intention of forcing matters, he preferred to await events, hoping that Marmont's impetuosity might tempt him to make an incautious move.

He had not long to wait, for in a short time Marmont made a disposition which separated his left entirely from his centre, and left a large inviting gap.

This was the moment for which the eagle-eyed English Commander had been waiting, and like an eagle he swooped upon it.

He was eating his dinner in a farmyard when it occurred, walking about the whole time munching, with his field glass in his hand, and constantly looking through it. On a sudden he exclaimed, "By G——, they are extending their line; order my horses!" The horses were brought and he was off in an instant, followed only by his old German dragoon, who went with him everywhere.³

Galloping straight off to his brother-in-law General Pakenham's division, he ordered him to commence the attack.

¹ Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, p. 77.

² Kincaid Adventures, p. 81. ³ Greville's Journal, Vol. I, p. 136.

" Give me your hand ", says Ned Pakenham,* " and it shall be done."¹ With gravity Lord Wellington complied, a warm handclasp ensued, and Pakenham was off to do his job.

Shortly afterwards the Allied army in a state of ecstatic movement, was tasting the longed-for and seldom experienced joy of *attacking* instead of *receiving* an attack. " The effect ", says Kincaid, " was instantaneous and decisive, for although some obstinate and desperate fighting took place in the centre, with various success, yet the victory was never for a moment in doubt . . ."²

Nevertheless the battle raged throughout the day. Nor did the Allies have it all their own way, " for ", says Napier, " courage and strength were in even balance until Wellington's genius struck the beam ".³

As for the English Chief himself—" seen that day at every point precisely when his presence was most required . . ."⁴ he was both an inspiration and an anxiety to his army who feared at times for his personal safety. " I thought ", says an officer of the Light Division, who saw him under fire within fifty yards of the enemy's front, " he was exposing himself unnecessarily . . ."⁵

Before the end of the battle he was actually hit ; he was giving me some orders [says William Napier †] when a ball passed through his left holster, and struck his thigh ; he put his hand to the place, and his countenance changed for an instant, but only for an instant ; and to my eager enquiry if he was hurt, he replied, sharply, " No ! " and went on with his orders.⁶

¹ *Greville's Journal*, Vol. I, p. 136. ² *Kincaid, Adventures*, p. 82.

³ *Napier*, Vol. IV, p. 296. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁵ *Peninsular Sketches*, Vol. I, p. 346.

⁶ *Life of Sir William Napier*, Vol. I, p. 101.

* Pakenham, Sir Edward Michael, 1778-1815. General. Served in the Peninsular War and was afterwards killed on January 8, 1815, in the War between England and America. He was the son of Edward Michael Pakenham, 2nd Baron Longford.

† Napier, Sir William Francis Patrick, General, 1785-1860. Historian of Peninsular War. Son of Colonel George Napier and Lady Sarah Napier (née Lennox).

The battle at this juncture however was nearly ended ; the French had had enough of it—darkness began to fall—the firing died away, and beaten at all points the enemy retreated from the field.

It was a sweeping victory, the most complete and decisive yet gained by the Allies in the Peninsula. A victory, moreover, of great portent, whose heartening effects poured like a tonic over Europe, nerving the war-weary nations to fresh efforts in the fight for peace.

And the victor of that epoch-making battle, what were his feelings as he contemplated the results of his great triumph ?

I saw him late in the evening of that great day [says Napier] when the advancing flashes of cannon and musketry stretching as far as the eye could command showed in the darkness how well the field was won ; he was alone, the flush of victory was on his brow and his eyes were eager and watchful, but his voice was calm and even gentle.¹

For several days after the battle the French continued their retreat, closely followed by the Allied army, who on July 30th took possession of the city of Valladolid.

The inhabitants of that city were overjoyed at their deliverance and, “ . . . if Lord Wellington would have let them they would have knelt and prayed to him ”,² says Frederick Ponsonby who formed part of his escort, as he rode into the town.

Marmont’s army now being in full retreat, Lord Wellington stopped the pursuit at Valladolid, and turning south headed for Madrid, which was then held by the army of Joseph Bonaparte.

On Lord Wellington’s advance the French evacuated Madrid, which the Allies entered on August 12th, the inhabitants evincing the same wild enthusiasm. “ They appear ”, wrote Captain Bowles, “ to consider Lord Wellington as a species of divinity.”³ Shawls and mantles were spread for his horse to tread upon, and when he dismounted he was so

¹ Napier, Vol. IV, p. 299.

² Leveson Gower, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 455.

³ Malmesbury, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 306.

violently embraced by feminine admirers, being handed from one to the other, that "he became fairly exhausted by their uncontrollable attentions".¹ *

I am among a people mad with joy for their deliverance from their oppressors [he wrote his old friend Malcolm]; God send that my good fortune may continue, and that I may be the instrument of securing their independence and happiness.²

But if Lord Wellington was 'a divinity' he was a very human one, and some amusing incidents illustrative of this fact, occurred about this time in Goya's studio at Madrid, where the English General was sitting for his portrait. It is said that he did not altogether appreciate the likeness, which had caused dissension between patron and artist and somewhat disturbed the harmony of the sittings.

Goya being deaf, appears to have misunderstood some remarks made by Lord Wellington, and imagining himself insulted,

in sudden passion rushed to his pistols to avenge the fancied insult. Xavier Goya was in the studio, and snatched the arms from his father. Wellington also a man of hot temper, was not appeased for several days, but eventually peace was made and the portrait finished.³ †

Be that as it may, the atmosphere of the studio seems to have been decidedly prickly, and McGrigor, arriving to report to his Chief on the condition of the Salamanca wounded, found he had walked into an active volcano.

¹ *Stocqueler, Vol. I, p. 181.*

² *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VII, p. 384.*

³ *Hugh Stokes, Francisco Goya, p. 270.*

* This was told to Stocqueler by the Duke himself.

† The author personally considers this story to be true, but at the same time, cannot accept responsibility for its authenticity, as Hugh Stokes in his work, *Francisco Goya*, has not cited his authority for this particular incident. His book, however, is based upon such authorities as Charles Yriarte, who had access to the Goya family papers, and Laurent Matheron, who was personally acquainted with De Brugada, Goya's companion, and there is no reason to suppose the story in question lacks authentic backing.

At first, however, it was quiescent, and all went well;

he received me [says the doctor] in the kindest and warmest manner . . . asked me if I was not too much busied to sit down and give him the detail of the state of the wounded at Salamanca, with that of my journey thence. I related to him the number of sick I had met with at so many places and their miserable state. But when I came to inform him that for their relief I had ordered up purveying and commissariat officers, he started up, and in a violent manner reprobated what I had done. It was to no purpose that I pleaded the number of seriously ill and dying I had met with; and that several men and some officers had died without ever having been seen by a medical officer . . . All was in vain. His lordship was in a passion, and the Spanish artist ignorant of the English language looked aghast.¹

And well he might, for the calm controlled Englishman had entirely disappeared and in his place an angry Irishman was lashing himself into further fury by the impetus of his own words :

I shall be glad to know [he exclaimed] who is to command the army, I or you? I establish one route, one line of communication for the army, you establish another, and order the commissariat and the supplies by that line. As long as you live sir never do so again, never do anything without my orders.

I pleaded [continued the doctor] that there was no time to consult him to save life. He peremptorily desired me, "never again to act without his orders". Hereupon I was about to take my leave, when in a lower tone of voice, he begged I would dine with him that day and of course I bowed assent.²

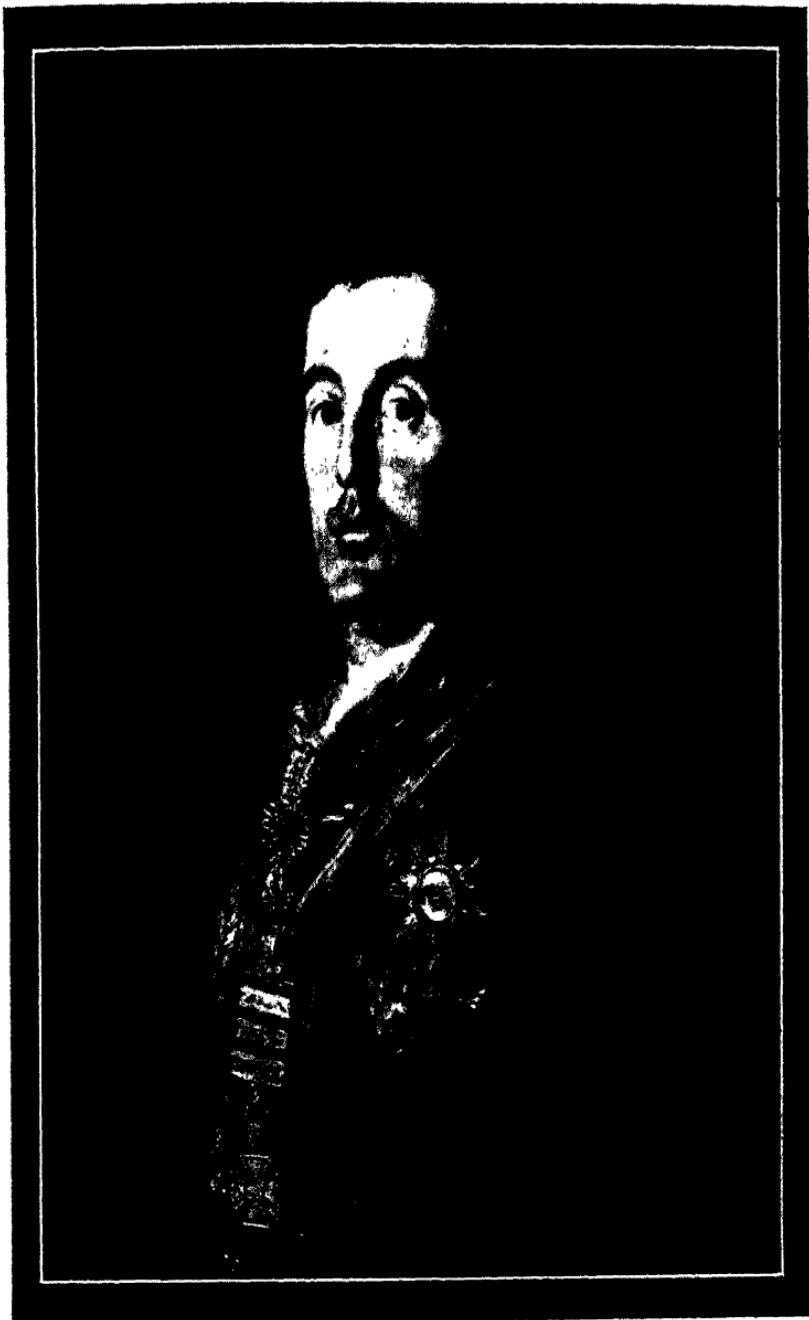
For the storm had blown itself out, and a contrite and secretly ashamed Englishman sought in his own particular way to make amends. He could not quite apologize and undermine the infallibility of Commander-in-Chief, but anything short of that he would gladly and willingly do.

At dinner that night therefore, McGrigor was treated with "unusual civility and marked attention",³ and placed in the seat of honour beside Lord Wellington. And a little later a letter went to England to the Secretary of State enclosing,

¹ *McGrigor*, pp. 300, 301.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*



“HE DID NOT ALTOGETHER APPRECIATE THE LIKENESS.”

a memorandum from Dr. M'Grigor regarding his allowance, to which I beg to draw your attention ; and I shall be very happy if something can be done for him. He is a most deserving man, and has conducted the department of which he is the head with great success.¹

Lord Wellington's Salamanca despatches did not arrive in England until August 16th, more than three weeks after the battle. Rumours, however, of an action and various unofficial accounts of a victory had been floating about, and the public and relatives were kept in a state of acute anxiety. "An officer, I understand, is landed at Plymouth", wrote Lady Bessborough to Lord Granville on August 7th, ". . . what news will he bring me? God grant it may be good—We know it is glorious."²

The Ministers, too, were getting jumpy.

For some days we have been in a state of suspense from contradictory rumours [wrote Lord Bathurst to Lord Wellington on August 6th] and Sir Home Popham's * letters, received last night, have now thrown us into a tumult of joy . . . Your victory of the 22nd . . . will, I am sure, keep pace with our most sanguine wishes.³

Ten days later, Lord Wellington's despatches arrived, fulfilling every expectation. "I write amidst the acclamations of all London," says a much-relieved Secretary of State to the Hero of the hour, "you must excuse me, therefore, if I do not write intelligibly."⁴

None was more proud of Arthur's success than his old friend and chief, the Marquess of Buckingham.

I know how to appreciate for the public the services you have rendered to Europe [he wrote] . . . but the public cannot share with me the pride and gratification I feel in the splendid achievements and exaltation of one whom from the intercourse I had with him in his early youth

¹ *Despatches, Vol. IX, p. 452.*

² *Leveson Gower Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 444.*

³ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VII, p. 374.* ⁴ *Ibid., p. 383.*

* Sir Home Popham was in command of a naval force operating off the coast of Spain in collaboration with Lord Wellington's land forces.

I had almost considered as one of my own children, and whose matchless career I have watched with almost parental anxiety.¹

It seems incredible that any Englishman should have refused to enter into the general rejoicings ; nevertheless, politics, as usual in some quarters transcended patriotism.

The *Statesman* of today provokes me [observes Lady Bessborough in her letter of September 7th], what can its croaking Editor mean by chusing this moment to lament over losses, and expatiate on the harm we have done the Spaniards in preventing their enjoying the mild blessings of Buonaparte's Government . . . and then enumerating all who have fallen since the beginning of the contest—" *to stain the soil of Spain with British blood*" ?²

Apart from the pessimistic journalists, there was also "the gloomy conclave, who had just discovered that the battle of Salamanca, if it *was* a Victory, had been much exaggerated ; that its results would be barren in all but glory . . ." ³

But presently Lady Bessborough was cheered by the enthusiasm of a little Spanish lady, who clasped her hands together in ecstasy at the mention of Lord Wellington's name, calling him in her pretty broken English, " a most great *Capitan*, or sooner a *Gode* gone to save my poor Country ".⁴

And while the world was yet ringing with his praises, Arthur had started upon a road that was to lead him away from the sunny fields of success to the gloomy caverns of disappointment and failure.

Leaving Hill in command of a part of the army at Madrid, he had set out on September 2nd with the remainder, and was heading north towards Burgos whose capture was to be the next step of his campaign.

He started off in good spirits. " Matters go on well ",

¹ *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. VII, p. 403.

² *Leveson Gower Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 454.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 457.

he is writing on September 7th, " and I hope before Christmas, if affairs turn out as they ought, and Boney requires all the reinforcements in the North, to have all the gentlemen safe on the other side of the Ebro."¹

But arrived before Burgos, the prospect appeared less rosy : " We invested this place yesterday ", he wrote on September 20th, " and took by storm last night the horn work, which commands the greatest part of the works of the castle. I doubt however that I have means to take the castle which is very strong."²

" We are not going on in a very satisfactory way here," he writes a few days later to Marshal Beresford, " however, if we are lucky in the next two days I think I shall take the place."³

But he was not lucky, and troubles were gathering thickly round him. Apart from the ever-present scarcity of money, ammunition was now running short, and he had not sufficient artillery.

" I do not know what to say of this d——d place ",⁴ he is writing Beresford a few days later. He was getting a little irritable now, ". . . the daily disappointments, and the unfavourable morning reports of the results of our operations . . .", says McGrigor, " made his lordship fretful. This all felt who came into contact with him."⁵

It was, perhaps, hardly the moment to choose to introduce new-fangled ideas to the Commander-in-Chief's notice, and an officer of Marines sent to Headquarters to demonstrate a new form of bayonet exercise which was to make 'one British Soldier equal to twelve French', received scant encouragement, ". . . and after Lord W. had looked and listened with some impatience, he gave his orders for the day to the Adjutant-General, mounted his horse, and galloped to the trenches."⁶

And now a personal grief was added to his troubles, for

¹ *Despatches, Vol. IX, p. 394.*

² *Ibid., p. 430.*

³ *Ibid., p. 445.*

⁴ *Ibid., p. 466.*

⁵ *McGrigor, p. 303.*

⁶ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VII, p. 443.*

on the night of October 7th he lost one of his finest and most promising officers, Major the Hon. C. Cocks,* to whom he was greatly attached. This upset him badly, and when on the morning of the 8th he visited Fred Ponsonby's room, as was his custom, for an early morning chat, he could not bring himself to speak but walked about in painful silence. "At last he opened the door and said as he went out, 'Cocks† was killed last night.' " ¹

"I think I never saw Lord W. so affected as he was at Cocks's death . . ." ² wrote Thomas Sydenham to Henry Wellesley. And at the funeral, which the Commander-in-Chief attended in person, "the painful expression of his countenance was so marked, that no one . . . presumed to approach him." ³

Lord Wellington's efforts before Burgos continued until October 21st, when news from Hill that the armies of King Joseph and Soult were marching towards him, caused the Commander-in-Chief to raise the siege and hurry south.

It was a bitter disappointment :

I felt severely [he wrote to Lord Bathurst] the sacrifice I was obliged to make. Your Lordship is well aware that I never was very sanguine in my expectations of success in the siege of Burgos . . . but it appeared to me, that if we should succeed, the advantage to the cause would be great, and the final success of the campaign would have been certain.⁴

And so instead of standing triumphant on the hill of victory, Lord Wellington turned to face that most melancholy of military prospects, retreat after failure.

¹ *Mitford Recollections, British Museum Add. MS. 32571, folio 227.*

² *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VII, p. 459.*

³ *Tomkinson, p. 217.*

⁴ *Dispatches, Vol. IX, p. 520.*

* Major the Hon. Charles Somers Cocks of the 16th Light Dragoons. A magnificent outpost officer who reciprocated Lord Wellington's sentiments, always showing complete confidence in his Chief, and from the first standing up against the 'croakers' in the army.

† In the Mitford MSS. it is spelt Cox. The correct spelling is given above to avoid confusion.

On October 22nd the French commenced the pursuit, and came thundering upon the British rear. Storm clouds were gathering both north and south and the English General was in for a spell of dirty weather.

His troubles were not lightened by the conduct of his army, which was adding to the difficulties of a fighting retreat by the disorderliness of its behaviour. "I have never witnessed the like . . .", says McGrigor, "all subordination was gone, all alike, English, Scotch and Irish were equally slaves of drunkenness, and the consequent state of insubordination was awful."¹

At Torquemada the second day out from Burgos, the British troops fell foul of the great wine-vaults of that city, and whilst the rear-guard was fighting an action twelve thousand of their comrades "were at one time in a state of hopeless inebriety".²

But transcending all other worries, and tugging ever at Lord Wellington's heart-strings was anxiety for his wounded, always the most painful preoccupation of a humane general in retreat. So insistent was this gnawing anxiety that in the middle of a fight at Valladolid, he sent for his surgeon-in-chief who was encamped in the neighbourhood.

McGrigor hurried to the spot and found his Chief in the upper floor of a small house which was being heavily cannonaded.

On my entering [says McGrigor] he [Lord Wellington] came quickly from a window with his glass in his hand and eagerly inquired about the hospitals in Valladolid and the wounded there, saying "I fear our numbers are very great . . . what is to be done", to which you see we must be off from this place, and conveyance there is none."³

McGrigor answered that the number of wounded was small as he had been daily commandeering carts and mule conveyance to send them to a place of safety; they were now well on their way to Oporto with instructions to the Medical Officer there to embark them should occasion arise.

¹ McGrigor, p. 313. ² Napier, Vol. IV, p. 362. ³ McGrigor, p. 309.

A load of care fell from Lord Wellington's mind. "This is excellent", he said, "now I care not how soon we are off".

Here was a great feather in McGrigor's cap, and a victory as well, and being only human he could not resist the opportunity to rub it in. "My lord, you remember how much you blamed me at Madrid . . . when I could not consult your lordship and acted for myself. . . . Now if I had not what would the consequences have been?"

His lordship was neatly cornered, but far to relieved to care. Nevertheless the *Commander-in-Chief* made a last flicker of protest. "It is all right as it has turned out", he observed, "but I recommend you still to have my orders for what you do."²

On October 29th Lord Wellington crossed the ~~Duero~~, blowing up the bridges behind him. He breathed a little more freely now: "I think my junction with Hill . . . is now quite certain", he wrote Mr. Stuart on the 31st, "and that I have got clear, in a handsome manner, of the worst scrape I ever was in."³

By November 6th, however, the French had repaired the bridges in his rear, and he fell back upon Salamanca, whence having been joined by Hill, he stood at bay upon his old battleground.

The enemy's forces, like an engulfing tidal wave, now crept upon him from all sides, their numbers reaching to 90,000, 12,000 of which were cavalry; "nearly all were veteran troops, and they had one hundred and twenty pieces of artillery".⁴

Against this multitude Lord Wellington could muster but 68,000, a mixture of Spanish, Portuguese, German, and British, 4,000 only being cavalry, and 70 guns.

¹ *McGrigor*, p. 309. ² *Ibid.* ³ *Dispatches*, Vol. IX, p. 59.

⁴ *Napier*, Vol. IV, p. 377.

* The King's German Legion. In 1714 the Elector of Hanover ascended the throne of England as George I. From that time until the death of William IV, the King of England was also Sovereign of

Nevertheless, for five more days he still hung on, hoping in spite of all odds to fight a successful action on the ground he knew so well.

Soult, however, had no intention of indulging him, but instead manœuvred to cut his communication with Ciudad Rodrigo. This clinched the matter, and the English General was reluctantly compelled to retreat towards Portugal.

Reluctant, too, was his army, who had already retreated two hundred miles and who preferred the most hazardous fight to the miseries of a retreat.

But unpleasant as had been the first part of the retreat, it was as nothing to the second, which commenced on November 15th in the heavy autumn rains, and by the night of the 17th the camping-grounds resembled lakes.

To add to these miseries, hunger accompanied the army on its gloomy march.

We were [says Sherer] miserably provided, having neither bread biscuit nor flour. Lean bullocks, which travelled with us, were slaughtered daily, as we halted, and putting your miserable ration on a stick, or the point of your sword, you broiled it on wood ashes, and ate it greedily, half smoked, and half raw . . . ¹

Sleep, too, that solace of human woe, was often denied the retreating army, and on one occasion when the troops were comfortably tucked up in their beds of liquid mud, their slumbers were disturbed by a continued firing of musketry

which [says Kincaid] led us to believe that our pickets were attacked, and in momentary expectation of an order to stand to our arms, we kept ourselves awake the whole night, and were not a little provoked when we found, next morning, that it had been occasioned by numerous stragglers from the different regiments, shooting at the pigs belonging to the peasantry, which were grazing in the wood.²

Sharing in all the hardships and discomforts and bearing

¹ Sherer, *Recollections*, p. 219. ² Kincaid, *Adventures*, p. 92.

Hanover. The Hanoverian troops fighting under Wellington in the Peninsula were a magnificent body of men and most efficient soldiers.

them all with cheerfulness and even gaiety was Harry Smith's gallant little Spanish wife.

Not a murmur escaped her but once [says her husband], I had had no sleep for three nights, our rear being in a very ticklish position. In sitting by the fire I had fallen asleep, and fell between the fire and her . . . This change of temperature awoke her, and for the only time in her life did she cry and say I might have avoided it. She had just woken out of her sleep, and when cold and shivery our feelings are acute. In a moment she exclaimed, "How foolish! You must have been nice and warm, and to know that is enough for me."¹

And so hungry and wet, fighting and falling, the tired and dispirited army squelched its weary muddy way to the longed-for haven of Ciudad Rodrigo, and the sheltering frontiers of Portugal.

The retreat ended on November 18th just as the temper, patience, and discipline of the army was on the point of breaking, had indeed to a great extent already broken, so that its subordination was seriously threatened. ". . . Nothing", observes a cavalry officer, "could equal the irregularity of the troops . . . discipline was lost, and men did (in the infantry) what they pleased, unreproved by their officers."²

Neither was insubordination confined to the ranks, and an incident which occurred on the last day of the retreat forms a very pretty example of its existence in high places. Lord Wellington had ordered the army to take a certain road, longer and apparently more difficult than the direct one; this [says Napier] seemed so extraordinary to some general officers, that, after consulting together, they deemed their commander unfit to conduct the army and led their troops by what appeared to them the fittest line of retreat! He [Lord Wellington] had before daylight placed himself at an important point on his own road, and waited impatiently for the arrival of the leading division until dawn; then suspecting what had happened he galloped to the other road and found the would-be commanders stopped by water. The insubordination and the danger to the army were alike glaring, yet the practical rebuke was so severe and well timed, the humiliation so complete and so deeply

¹ *Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, p. 86.*

² *Tomkinson, p. 224.*

felt, that with one proud sarcastic observation, indicating contempt more than anger, he led back the troops and drew off all his forces safely.¹

All things being considered, it was hardly surprising that Lord Wellington was not in the best of spirits on his arrival at Ciudad Rodrigo, and McGrigor coming to him to report on hospital matters had a somewhat depressing interview.

I found him [says he] in a miserable small room leaning over the fire. He was attentively reading some printed paper. He begged me to be seated. I could see that the paper he was reading was Cobbet's Register . . . After perusing it for a few minutes he threw it in the fire, and anxiously enquired what reports I had of the sick and wounded. He was in a very bad humour; he adverted in bitter language to the disorder of the retreat.²

And as the full cost of these disorders was brought home to him by the immense returns of missing Lord Wellington's feelings eventually overflowed in the following circular letter to the general officers of his army :

GENTLEMEN,

I have ordered the army into cantonments, in which I hope that circumstances will enable me to keep them for some time, during which the troops will receive their clothing, necessaries etc., which are already in progress by different lines of communication to the several divisions of Brigades.

But besides these objects, I must draw your attention in a very particular manner to the state of discipline of the troops. The discipline of every army, after a long and active campaign, becomes in some degree relaxed, and requires the utmost attention on the part of the general and other officers to bring it back to the state in which it ought to be for service; but I am concerned to have to observe that the army under my command has fallen off in this respect in the late campaign to a greater degree than any army with which I have ever served, or of which I have ever read.

¹ *Napier, Vol. IV, p. 386.*

² *McGrigor, p. 325.*

Yet this army has met with no disaster ; it has suffered no privations which but trifling attention on the part of the officers could not have prevented, and for which there existed no reason whatever in the nature of the service ; nor has it suffered any hardships excepting those resulting from the necessity of being exposed to the inclemencies of the weather at a moment when they were most severe.

It must be obvious however to every officer, that from the moment the troops commenced their retreat from the neighbourhood of Burgos on the one hand, and from Madrid on the other, the officers lost all command over their men. Irregularities and outrages of all descriptions were committed with impunity, and losses have been sustained which ought never to have occurred. Yet the necessity for retreat existing, none was ever made on which the troops made such short marches ; none on which they made such long and repeated halts ; and none on which the retreating armies were so little pressed on their rear by the enemy.*

We must look therefore for the existing evils, and for the situation in which we now find the army, to some cause besides those resulting from the operations in which we have been engaged.

I have no hesitation in attributing these evils to the habitual inattention of the Officers of the regiments to their duty, as prescribed by the standing regulations of the service, and by the orders of this army.

I am far from questioning the zeal, still less the gallantry and spirit, of the Officers of the army ; and I am quite certain that if their minds can be convinced of the necessity of minute and constant attention to understand, recollect, and carry

* One of the features of the retreat was the slowness of the enemy pursuit. King Joseph, according to Napier, blamed his generals of Cavalry for not following the Allies more vigorously from Salamanca. "Certainly", observes Napier, "the army was so little pressed that none would have supposed the French horsemen were numerous."—*History of the Peninsular War*, Vol. IV, pp. 387, 388.

into execution the orders which have been issued for the performance of their duty, and that the strict performance of this duty is necessary to enable the army to serve the country as it ought to be served, they will in future give their attention to these points.

Unfortunately the inexperience of the Officers of the army has induced many to consider that the period during which an army is on service is one of relaxation from all rule, instead of being, as it is, the period during which of all others every rule for the regulation and control of the conduct of the soldier, for the inspection and care of his arms, ammunition, accoutrements, necessaries, and field equipments, and his horse and horse appointments; for the receipt and issue and care of his provisions; and the regulation of all that belongs to his food and the forage for his horse, must be most strictly attended to by the officers of his company or troop, if it is intended that an army, a British army in particular, shall be brought into the field of battle in a state of efficiency to meet the enemy on the day of trial.

These are the points then to which I most earnestly intreat you to turn your attention, and the attention of the officers of the regiments under your command, Portuguese as well as English, during the period in which it may be in my power to leave the troops in their cantonments. The Commanding Officers of regiments must enforce the orders of the army regarding the constant inspection and superintendence of the officers over the conduct of the men of their companies in their cantonments; and they must endeavour to inspire the non-commissioned officers with a sense of their situation and authority; and the non-commissioned officers must be forced to do their duty by being constantly under the view and superintendence of the officers. By this means the frequent and discreditable resource to the authority of the provost, and to punishments by the sentence of courts martial, will be prevented, and the soldiers will not dare to commit the offences and outrages of which there

are too many complaints, when they well know that their officers and their non-commissioned officers have their eyes and attention turned towards them.

The Commanding Officers of regiments must likewise enforce the orders of the army regarding the constant, real inspection of the soldiers' arms, ammunition, accoutrements, and necessaries, in order to prevent at all times the shameful waste of ammunition, and the sale of that article and of the soldiers necessaries. With this view both should be inspected daily.

In regard to the food of the soldier, I have frequently observed and lamented in the late campaign, the facility and celerity with which the French soldiers cooked in comparison with those of our army.

The cause of this disadvantage is the same with that of every other description, the want of attention of the officers to the orders of the army, and the conduct of their men, and the consequent want of authority over their conduct. Certain men of each company should be appointed to cut and bring in wood, others to fetch water, and others to get the meat, etc. to be cooked ; and it would soon be found that if this practice was daily enforced, and a particular hour for seeing the dinners, and for the men dining, named, as it ought to be, equally as for parade, that cooking would no longer require the inconvenient length of time which it has lately been found to take, and that the soldiers would not be exposed to the privation of their food at the moment at which the army may be engaged in operations with the enemy.

You will of course give your attention to the field exercise and discipline of the troops. It is very desirable that the soldiers should not lose the habits of marching, and the division should march 10 or 12 miles twice in each week, if the weather should permit, and the roads in the neighbourhood of the cantonments of the division should be dry.

But I repeat, that the great object of the attention of the

General and Field Officers must be to get the Captains and Subalterns of the regiments to understand and perform the duties required from them, as the only mode by which the discipline and efficiency of the army can be restored and maintained during the next campaign.

I have the honour to be, etc.,
WELLINGTON.¹

This now famous letter, which has made a great noise in the world, was not intended as a public censure, nor was it for publication; being addressed to the General Officers commanding Divisions and Brigades. It is perhaps needless to observe that it was not kept amongst those to whom it was addressed, but found its way into every nook and cranny of the army, and was even published in the newspapers at home!

It produced a storm. The mind of the army got no further than the first five paragraphs containing the censure of its conduct; the remainder—and by far the greater part of the letter dealing with the means of avoiding the necessity for such censure in the future—might never have been written. The fat in the army frying-pan already at boiling-point after the trying retreat, now overflowed, and falling into the fire went hissing heavenwards in blue flames of indignation against the army's Chief.

To Lord Wellington's enemies, the letter was milk and honey, for it gave them a pretext to fall upon him. To those who loved him, however, it brought sadness, knowing how dearly he would have to pay for it.

Up to this period [says Kincaid] Lord Wellington had been adored by the army, in consideration of his brilliant achievements, and for his noble and manly bearing in all things; but in consequence of some disgraceful irregularities which took place during the retreat, he immediately after issued an order, conveying a sweeping censure on the whole army. . . .

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. IX, pp. 574, 575, 576, 577.*

That not only censure, but condign punishment was merited in many instances, is certain ; and, had his lordship dismissed some officers from the service, and caused some of the disorderly soldiers to be shot, it would not only have been an act of justice, but probably a necessary example. Had he hanged every commissary, too, who failed to issue the regular rations to the troops dependent on him . . . it would only have been a just sacrifice to the offended stomachs of many thousands of gallant fellows.

In our brigade [continues Kincaid] I can safely say, that the order in question excited more of sorrow than of anger ; we thought that, had it been *particular*, it would have been just ; but, as it was *general*, that it was inconsiderate ; and we, therefore, regretted that he who had been, and still was, the god of our idolatry, should thereby have laid himself open to the attacks of the ill-natured.¹

Lord Wellington took the responsibility for the failure before Burgos entirely upon his own shoulders, and did not attempt to lay any part of it on others. "I see", he wrote to Lord Liverpool, "that a disposition already exists to blame the Government for the failure of the siege of Burgos. The Government had nothing to say to the siege. It was entirely my own act."²

As for his own disappointment and the withering of these bright hopes with which he had started the Salamanca campaign, Lord Wellington took it all with the philosophy of a true sportsman.

. . . I played a game which might succeed [he wrote to a friend] (the only one which could succeed), and pushed it to the last ; and the parts having failed, as I admit was to be expected, I have at last made a handsome retreat to the Agueda, with some labour and inconvenience, but without material loss. I believe I have done right.³

¹ *Kincaid, Adventures*, pp. 96, 97, 98.

² *Dispatches*, Vol. IX, p. 566.

³ *Supp. Despatches*, Vol. VII, p. 478.

Chapter Fifteen

FAREWELL PORTUGAL VITORIA

The wise and active conquer difficulties by daring to
attempt.

Rowe.

THE failure before Burgos, the withdrawal from Madrid and the retreat of Lord Wellington's armies to the Portuguese frontier put the Opposition in excellent fettle; and when Parliament met at the end of 1812 they opened out with their big guns upon the Government. There was the usual belittlement of Lord Wellington's victories and magnifying of his reverses, but in addition to this a new line of tactics was adopted, and the Government were attacked for inadequately supporting the Peninsular Campaign!

This was possibly a salutary proceeding and when the Parliamentary storm had blown itself out nobody was any the worse.

As for the Government themselves, they did not allow the retreat from Burgos to quench their admiration for the great achievements of the Campaign of 1812, nor did they fail to honour the victor of Salamanca; and on December 3rd he was publicly thanked in both Houses.

Previously to this he had been created Marquess after the Battle of Salamanca, with a grant of £100,000 to support the title. But though he expressed his public gratitude for favours bestowed which "are far beyond my hopes",¹ his private

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. IX, p. 397.*

remark to a friend, "What the devil is the use of making me a Marquess?"¹ is characteristic of his personal attitude

The grant of £100,000, however, was another matter, for he had his children's future to provide for, and he gladly laid it out in the purchase of Wellington Manor and the estate of Wellington Park in Somersetshire.

Spain, too, had remembered him with gratitude, and after the Battle of Salamanca had bestowed upon him that decoration which he seems to have prized above all others, the Order of the Golden Fleece.

By the beginning of December the Allied Army was settled into cantonments for the winter, Headquarters being established at Freneda, a dirty little village near the Spanish Portuguese frontier.

As soon as he could get away Lord Wellington set off for Cadiz to visit the Spanish Government, who had offered him the Chief Command of their armies, a post which was to bring him more worry than satisfaction, and which he accepted not without misgivings. Nevertheless, it was an expedient which had to be tried;

it is obvious [he wrote to Marshal Beresford before starting] that we cannot expect to save the Peninsula by military efforts, unless we can bring forward the Spaniards in some shape or other; and I want to see how far I can venture to go, in putting the Spanish army in a state to do something. In your life you never saw anything so bad as the Galicians: yet they are the finest body of men and best movers I have ever seen.

God knows the prospect of success from this journey of mine is not bright, but still it is best to try something.²

Lord Wellington left Freneda on December 12th, accompanied only by Lord Fitzroy Somerset* and Colonel

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VII, p. 422.*

² *Despatches, Vol. IX, p. 609.*

* Somerset, Lord Fitzroy James Henry, 1st Baron Raglan, Field-Marshal, 1788-1855. Youngest son of Henry, 5th Duke of Beaufort. He may almost be described as Wellington's shadow, for he was with

Alava.* As he passed through Alcantara, Schaumann got a peep of him, "under the triumphal arch on the bridge", where the notabilities of the town had assembled to greet him. "How simple, and yet how great," he observes, "Lord Wellington again appeared on this occasion."¹

The Commander-in-Chief reached Cadiz on Christmas Eve, and on December 30th addressed the Cortes † in the Spanish language, and during the whole of his visit worked hard to produce some system of organization which should be of benefit to the Campaign.

It was a difficult task for a foreigner to undertake, yet "his presence", says Napier, "seemed agreeable to the Cortes and the people . . . and his ascendancy of mind produced patient hearing . . ."²

Nevertheless he was not over sanguine at the success of his visit. ". . . I hope I shall have done some good in the way of organization," he wrote from Cadiz to Lord Bathurst on January 1st, "but I am not yet certain."³

He returned to Headquarters, however, "in high spirits and great good humour with everyone",⁴ arriving in the

¹ Schaumann, p. 359.

² Napier, Vol. V, p. 15.

³ Dispatches, Vol. X, p. 18.

⁴ Larpern, Vol. I, p. 80.

him more or less continuously from the time he went to Portugal in 1808 as A.D.C. to Sir Arthur Wellesley, until the time of the Duke's death in 1852. In 1854 he was made Commander-in-Chief of the forces in the Crimea.

* Alava, Don Miguel Ricardo de, Spanish General and Statesman, 1770-1843. Spanish Commissary at Wellington's headquarters during the Peninsular War. Was present at the Battle of Waterloo. Was also present at the Battle of Trafalgar, on the flagship of his uncle, Admiral Alava, and is said to be the only man present at both Trafalgar and Waterloo. Was a great friend of Wellington, who showed him much kindness and assisted him when he was exiled from Spain by Ferdinand the returned King. ". . . From about 1826 to 1830", says Gleig (*Personal Reminiscences of the Duke of Wellington*, p. 151) "[he] subsisted entirely on the Duke's benevolence."

† The Spanish Parliament.

market-place of Freneda at six o'clock in the evening of January 25th.

There was plenty of work waiting for him, for times of military inaction were never holidays for the Commander-in-Chief.

With the legal affairs of the army he now had some help, in the person of Mr. Larpent, who had been sent to the Peninsula as Judge Advocate-General.

Larpent found his job a strenuous one. ". . . I really scarce know where to turn, and my fingers are quite fatigued, as well as my brains . . .",¹ he laments on February 7th.

"And how do you suppose I was plagued", Lord Wellington asked him, "when I had to do it nearly all myself?"²

Larpent's relations with his Chief were entirely harmonious,

Lord Wellington [he observes] . . . I like much in business affairs. He is very ready, and decisive, and civil, though some complain a little of him at times, and are much afraid of him.³

He thinks and acts quite for himself; *with* me, if he thinks I am right, but not otherwise. I have not, however, found [continues Larpent] what Captain — told me I should—that Lord Wellington immediately determines against anything that is suggested to him. On the contrary, I think he is reasonable enough. . . .⁴

But sometimes he would be very angry, especially when the Courts would not do their duty and crime in the army increased, then he would swear, and declare "his whole table was covered with details of robbery and mutiny, and complaints from all quarters, in all languages, and that he should be nothing but a General of Courts-martial".⁵

People who were slow-witted, too, got short shrift from the busy Commander-in-Chief. "I took care", he observed one day in speaking of a certain Commander of artillery, "to let him feel that I thought him very stupid."⁶

"That", commented the Quarter-Master-General privately,

¹ *Larpent*, Vol. I, p. 84.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 150.

"must have been by telling him so, in plain terms I have no doubt."¹

But nobody need have been afraid of him, for his explosions generally ended in a laugh, and were only a means of relieving a quick working and heavily taxed brain.

On hunting days he was easiest to handle and would stand "whip in hand ready to start",² and quickly dispose of all business. But some of the wily ones would track him to the hunting-field and "get him to answer things in a hasty way he did not intend, but which they went away and acted upon. 'Oh d—— them,' he said, 'I won't speak to them again when we are hunting.'"³

Lord Wellington had not long returned to Headquarters when he found his apprehensions concerning the Spanish Command beginning to be realized, and was soon launched on a series of protests to the Spanish War Minister which eventually became monotonous by force of repetition.

For though the Spanish Government had entrusted him with the chief command of the Spanish army, they behaved as if the Government, and not Lord Wellington, were Commander-in-Chief. Orders were issued without his knowledge, troops were moved unbeknown to him, until neither Lord Wellington nor the Spanish Generals knew what was happening in the army. Added to which the Government behaved as if an army could live on air, and the subsidies granted by the British Government for the support of the Spanish armies were spent on everything rather than the army.

It was an impossible state of affairs and at times Lord Wellington despaired of ever getting the Spanish troops into condition to pull their weight in the coming campaign :

... I am now sufficiently informed [he wrote the Spanish War Minister three months after assuming the command] to be able to assure your Excellency that there is not a single battalion or squadron in a situation to take the field ; that there is not in the whole kingdom of

¹ *Larpent*, Vol. I, pp. 149, 150.

² *Ibid.*

Spain a dépôt of provisions for the support of a single battalion in operation for one day, nor a shilling of money in any military chest.¹

From worries and perplexities Lord Wellington turned with relief to the lighter side of life, and on March 13th he gave a party at Ciudad Rodrigo, to invest General Cole* with the Order of the Bath.

It was the first time he had entertained in that town, and since he was the Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo, he resolved to do things in style.

The prospect, however, presented difficulties, for the ruined city was sadly lacking in all that goes to make a feast. But ingenuity and enthusiasm eventually triumphed; the arrangements were in the hands of the trusty Colin Campbell †; many willing helpers were enlisted; and the miracle was achieved.

The best house in the delapidated town was selected for the entertainment, and with the aid of hangings from a royal palace discovered hidden away in Ciudad Rodrigo, transformed into a setting worthy of a ducal feast.

But the scars of the siege lay beneath this splendour. In the ballroom several yards of the roof were missing, a chilly business for it was a bitter frosty night; and a hole in the floor of the supper room had a man on guard beside it, and a mat thrown over the hole.

The ingredients came from far and wide; the food, cooked in Lord Wellington's kitchen at Freneda, in company with the wine and silver, had a seventeen-mile journey to make; the crockery and glass came clattering over from Almeida, whilst the turkeys travelled forty miles before they reached the festive board.

When all was ready the lord of the feast appeared, threw

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. X, p. 182.*

* Lowry Cole, the officer who had once hoped to marry Kitty Pakenham.

† Of Ahmednuggur fame, now Colonel Campbell and attached to Headquarters staff.

himself whole-heartedly into the fun, and was the most energetic man of the party :

he prides himself on this [says Larpent], but yet I hear from those about him that he is a little broken down by it. He stayed at business at Frenada [sic Freneda] until half past three, and then rode full seventeen miles to Rodrigo in two hours to dinner, dressed in all his orders etc., was in high glee, danced himself, stayed supper, and at half past three in the morning went back to Frenada by moonlight and arrived before day-break at six, so that by twelve he was ready again for business, and I saw him amongst others upon a Court-martial when I returned at two¹

This was something like energy, and justified his staff's apprehensions, nevertheless he got through the winter unimpaired in health and strength, and day by day men saw his familiar figure amongst them, and watched him as he rode about his business.

We know Lord Wellington at a great distance [says one who saw him at this period] by his little flat cocked-hat (not a fraction of an inch higher than the crown) being set on his head, completely at right angles with his person, and sitting very upright in his hussar saddle. . . . Often he passes on in a brown study, or only returns the salutes of the officers at their posts ; but at other times he notices those he knows with a hasty, " Oh ! how d'ye do," or quizzes good-humouredly some one of us with whom he is well acquainted. His staff come rattling after him . . . and the *cortège* is brought up by his lordship's orderly, an old Hussar of the First Germans, who has been with him during the whole of the Peninsula war, and who, when he speaks of him, uses a German expression, literally meaning, good old fellow, emphatically implying in that language, attachment and regard.²

More honours came to Lord Wellington that winter.

In January he was presented with the Colonelcy of the Blues, a quite unexpected honour ; " there never was ", he declared to Colonel Torrens, " so fortunate or so favored a man ".³

The appointment, nevertheless, brought a tinge of sadness

¹ *Larpent*, Vol. I, p. 224.

² *Stocqueler*, Vol. I, pp. 210, 211, footnote.

³ *Dispatches*, Vol. X, p. 73.

in its train, for it meant severing connections with the beloved 33rd.

Although highly gratified by the honor which has been thus conferred upon me [he wrote Colonel Gore, the Colonel commanding the 33rd] . . . I cannot avoid feeling a regret . . . that I should be separated from the 33rd regiment, to which I have belonged, with so much satisfaction to myself, for more than twenty years.

I beg that you will take an opportunity of informing the regiment of the sentiments with which I quit them, and that though no longer belonging to them, I shall ever feel an anxiety for their interest and honor, and shall hear whatever conduces to the latter with the most lively satisfaction.¹

February brought him that most-prized British decoration, the Order of the Garter, but this too was not unmixed with sadness, for the vacancy was occasioned by the death of that warm friend of his boyhood, his first and kindly chief, Lord Buckingham.

The third honour coming to Lord Wellington at this period was from the Government of Portugal, who made him Duque de Vittoria—a title which had something prophetic in its bestowal, since a few months later victory was again to crown his efforts at the Battle of *Vitoria* in Spain.

By spring Lord Wellington's projects were well advanced for his next drive forward, and a ripple of expectation ran through the waiting army.

Early in May reviews began.

It was at a Review of the Hussars on the 18th that Lord Wellington, to the joy of the old campaigners, pulled out the tail feathers of the newly arrived Commander of the Brigade—a swollen-headed gentleman, equerry of the Prince Regent, who had been annoying the army with his overbearing ways.

He was soon, however, to find his own level, “for the Commander-in-Chief hated these puffed-up favourites who were sent out to him from England”,² and instead of being

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. X, p. 81.

² *Schaumann*, p. 366.

made much of and thanked in flattering terms at the end of the parade, a curt invitation to dinner shouted in "sonorous and very precise tones"¹, as Lord Wellington galloped from the field, was the only attention which came his way.

The big-wig's face was a study. "Even the Prince Regent had never dismissed him as haughtily as that. 'Traga la perro' (swallow that you dog)"² thought Schaumann who had witnessed the affair with much satisfaction, as he watched the discomfited one ride dejectedly away.

The army was now in the pink of condition, discipline restored, Burgos forgotten and the health of all ranks better than it had been at any time in the Peninsula. Even the Spanish, by dint of Lord Wellington's tireless efforts, were able to produce a quota for the field of efficient troops, clothed, fed, and in a tolerable state of discipline.

As for the Commander-in-Chief himself, although in excellent spirits, Larpent found him looking a little "worn and anxious"³; doubtless feeling the reaction of his unending labours, and the strain of responsibility contingent upon the commencement of a new campaign.

His energy, nevertheless, was incessant; he was here, there, and everywhere; "his lordship flies", observes an officer stationed at Sabugal. "He was here yesterday afternoon, ordered one pontoon to be burnt, and vanished in the smoke."⁴

In spite of his many preoccupations, he yet found time to sit down and write in his own hand a long letter of explanation to McGrigor concerning a point in which the Chief Surgeon's opinion had differed from his own.

I was not a little surprised [says McGrigor] at his sending any explanation, for his decision on any point was final . . . Again this letter of such extraordinary length was written at a time when other business the most important was on his mind previous to moving the whole army . . . and opening the campaign.⁵

¹ Schaumann, p. 366.

² *Ibid.*

³ Larpent, Vol. I, p. 285.

⁴ Frazer, *Peninsular Letters*, p. 105.

⁵ McGrigor, p. 529.

On May 22nd began that great advance which was to end on the soil of France ; and a virile eager army leapt forth from its winter quarters and passed high-heartedly over that same ground which it had traversed a few months previously in the bitterness of retreat.

A subtle sense of victory seemed to pervade all ranks from the humblest private to the Commander-in-Chief, and the story goes that as the latter passed over the Portuguese frontier he " turned round his horse, took off his hat, and said, ' Farewell, Portugal ! I shall never see you again.' "¹

As he passed through Salamanca, Lord Wellington attended Mass in the Cathedral, standing with his face towards the altar, dressed simply in " a very light-grey pelisse coat, single-breasted, without a sash ",² his unostentatious appearance forming a marked contrast to the gorgeously attired Spanish Generals and staff officers who formed his escort.

At Zamora where he was received with the ringing of bells, firing of guns and a cheering populace, the inhabitants,

accustomed to their own and the French generals, who affected a sort of oriental pomp . . . could not understand Lord Wellington's simplicity. " Is that Lord Wellington ", they exclaimed ; " the man who is sitting there so meekly in a grey coat has only one officer at his side . . . Good God ! ".³

By June the Allies had crossed the Duero, and the French having retired from Madrid, Toledo, etc., were heading in the direction of Burgos. By the 7th they were across the Pisuerga with the Allies hot upon their trail.

And now Burgos, city of ill-omen, loomed menacingly upon the horizon—was more time to be wasted, and were more lives to be squandered in another siege ? The army wished Burgos at the devil.

But even as they approached it a succession of mighty explosions rent the air, " and well did we know ", says

¹ Sir Herbert Maxwell, Vol. I, p. 310, footnote.

² *Peninsular Sketches*, Vol. II, p. 32. ³ Schaumann, p. 369.

Harry Smith, "the enemy had blown Burgos to where we wished it."¹

The sound of the explosion was music in Lord Wellington's ears for it opened out a wider field of vision before his eyes. No longer was his horizon to be bounded by the Ebro, he could push on now towards the Pyrenees.

But some of his officers thought this imprudent and advised him to take up the line of the Ebro.

I asked them [said he] what they meant by taking up the line of the Ebro, a river 300 miles long, and what good I was to do along that line? In short, I would not listen to the advice; and that very evening (or the very next morning) I crossed the river . . .²

And so, strong and confident in his own judgment, he carried his army forward, driving the French ever before him until he forced them to action on the field of Vitoria.

There was, however, another lap to go before Vitoria was reached, the last and hardest lap of all, through heavy mountainous country which might have dismayed the stoutest hearts. But nothing could stop Lord Wellington's army, for as Napier so beautifully expresses it,

neither the winter gullies nor the ravines, nor the precipitate passes amongst the rocks, retarded even the march of the artillery; where horses could not draw men hauled, when the wheels would not roll the guns were let down or lifted up with ropes; and strongly did the rough veteran infantry work their way through those wild but beautiful regions; six days they toiled unceasingly; on the seventh . . . they burst like raging streams from every defile and went foaming into the basin of Vitoria.³

The scene of the ensuing battle, the basin of Vitoria, was ten miles long by eight wide, cut in two by the River Zadora, intersected by mountainous ridges, and ringed round with mountains. Passing through the basin were two main roads, both of which led to Vitoria.

¹ Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, p. 96.

² Croker Papers, Vol. II, p. 106. ³ Napier, Vol. V, p. 222.

The rival armies lay on opposite sides of the river, the French having the city of Vitoria in their rear.

The day of the battle, the 21st June, broke in rain "with a thick vapour",¹ but later on thought better of it and turned into "a heavenly morning, bright and sunny . . .".²

At dawn Lord Wellington was in the saddle, and Schaumann, "drunk with sleep", staggered to the door of his tent and watched him as he clattered past with a large staff, "whose grave and fateful faces" broke into smiles at Schaumann's sketchy attire; "hurry up and get mounted," one of them advised him, "there will be interesting things to see today."³

The Allied army attacked in three sections which at the beginning of the battle were separated from each other by rough and hilly country. The right wing was commanded by Hill, the left by Graham, and the centre by Lord Wellington in person.

The outcome of the battle to the mind of the British army was a foregone conclusion, for, for the first time during the campaign the Allies outnumbered the French, a situation that to a British soldier admitted of but one ending.

Nevertheless the battle was by no means easily won, for troops who had once been the finest in the world were not going to give way without letting their adversaries feel their teeth. It was not, therefore, until six o'clock in the evening that the French were beaten back to their last defensible height before Vitoria, from whence they were driven on to the city itself, and out beyond the city limits into a mass of panic-stricken non-combatants, who awaited the result of the battle and blocked the line of retreat.

A scene of indescribable confusion ensued. Carriages, waggons, baggage and stores of all description blocked every outlet. Animals stampeded in all directions, terrified women and children rushed helplessly hither and thither. Everything was abandoned. Chests of money, jewels and clothes, choice wines, all the luxurious paraphernalia of King Joseph's

¹ *Napier*, Vol. V, p. 120.

² *Schaumann*, p. 375.

³ *Ibid.*

Court lay strewn about in all directions, as soldier and civilian pressed forward imbued only with the thought of flight.

Never was such a harvest reaped by victorious troops as that which lay spread out for their taking, in the wake of the beaten army ; “ the battle of Vittoria (*sic*) ”, observes one of Lord Wellington’s officers, “ was to the French like salt on a leech’s tail ! The plunder of Spain was disgorged at one thro’.”¹

Amongst the treasure-hunters, wandering over the late scene of action at the end of the day, a disconsolate little feminine figure, attended by an English groom, might have been seen picking its way tearfully over the battlefield ; blind to the spoil of war that lay invitingly around, and deaf to the practical remonstrances of the attendant who suggested the advisability of carrying some of it away.

It was Juanita looking for her Harry, a report having been circulated that he was killed. For several hours she had been searching, following the rear of the army in an agony of apprehension. Her lamentations eventually reached the object of her search, who, hoarse with cheering but very much alive, galloped up to reassure her of the fact.

“ Oh then, thank God, you are not killed, only badly wounded.”

“ Thank God . . . I am neither,” growled the hoarse but happy husband ; “ but ” he adds, “ in her ecstasy of joy, this was not believed for a long while.”²

Part of Joseph Buonaparte’s abandoned baggage consisted of some famous Spanish pictures, the property of the deposed Spanish King, which Lord Wellington caused to be carefully packed and sent to England to remain in safe custody until the end of the war. After the restoration of the monarchy he offered to return them to the king of Spain.

The King of Spain, however, refused to take the pictures back.

¹ *Twelve Years’ Military Adventure, Vol. II, p. 227.*

² *Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, p. 100.*

... His Majesty [wrote the Spanish Ambassador in reply to Wellington's offer], sensible of the delicacy of your conduct, is at the same time unwilling to deprive you of that which has come into your possession in a manner so just and honourable to you.¹

So the pictures remained in England, and formed part of the many trophies gracing the walls of Apsley House.

The baton of Marshal Jourdan was another trophy from the field of Vitoria, and Lord Wellington sent it home to the Prince Regent; in return for which he received a flattering letter from that personage, informing him that for his services at Vitoria he had been made a Field-Marshal of England. "You have sent me", wrote the Prince, "amongst the trophies of your unrivalled fame, the staff of a French Marshal, and I send you in return that of England."^{2 *}

Thus did Arthur Wellesley reach the highest rung of the military ladder in the satisfaction of having earned it, and amongst the good wishes of his friends and the world in general.

The great genius who has so admirably combined the operations leading to so glorious and successful a result [wrote Colonel Torrens to Lord Wellington's friend and Quarter-Master-General, Sir George Murray], is deserving of anything the country could possibly do for him; and what is more gratifying to him and to his friends, he richly deserves the exalted position his great character maintains in the estimation of the world. God bless him, and send him health and continued success.³

The Battle of Vitoria was the most decisive yet fought in the Peninsula. "Never", says Napier, "was a victory more complete."⁴ It marks an epoch in the Campaign and is the beginning of the end of French power in Spain.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. XIV, p. 655.*

² *Despatches, Vol. X, p. 532, footnote.*

³ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VIII, pp. 109, 110.*

⁴ *Napier, Vol. V, p. 127.*

* English Field-Marshal up to this period had not carried batons; the first one was made in Lord Wellington's honour.

The French after the battle took the only line of retreat that was open to them, and fled along the Pamplona road.

During their pursuit an incident occurred which caused a great deal of feeling in the British army, and earned for Lord Wellington much censure, both at the time, and since, and is one of the fattest plums in the cake of his detractors. The incident was as follows.

In a certain village along the French line of retreat, Lord Wellington had placed Captain Ramsay of the Horse Artillery, with his troop, bidding him to remain there until he (Lord Wellington) sent orders for him to move.

Ramsay, however, mistook the purport of his instructions which were only to move on orders *direct from Lord Wellington*, and when an order was brought to him by an assistant Quarter-Master-General to move on and join his brigade he did so, and thus defeated the purpose for which he had been placed in the village.

Shortly after he marched, Lord Wellington arrived, and finding Ramsay had moved was very angry and placed him in arrest for disobedience of orders.

The whole affair obviously arose from a misunderstanding. Lord Wellington being so certain in his own mind of what he intended probably did not stress his order, but delivered it in his usual quiet manner, not dreaming it was liable to any other interpretation. Ramsay, on the other hand, not having the key to the situation, interpreted the instructions in the more usual manner, viz. 'stay where you are until further orders', missing the point so clear to the mind of the Commander-in-Chief, that Ramsay must not move without *his* particular orders. It was a venial and very human error on Ramsay's part, caused by his mind moving mechanically on certain known lines, whereas an extra alertness would have made him aware that this particular order was slightly different from that which his mind was expecting to receive.

It is unfortunate that the affair occurred at a time when Lord Wellington had been particularly annoyed by disobe-

dience and inattention to orders in his army and was determined to put them down with a firm hand.

The fact is [he wrote in a private letter to Colonel Torrens on July 18th], that, if discipline means habits of obedience to orders . . . we have but little of it in the army. Nobody ever thinks of obeying an order ; and all the regulations of the Horse Guards, as well as of the War Office, and all the orders of the army applicable to this peculiar service, are so much waste paper . . . The cause of these defects is the want of habits of obedience and attention to orders by the inferior officers, and indeed I might add by all. They never attend to an order with an intention to obey it, or sufficiently to understand it, be it ever so clear, and therefore never obey it when obedience becomes troublesome, or difficult, or important.¹

It was confidently expected that, as soon as Ramsay had tendered his explanation, showing that his mistake arose from misapprehension of orders, he would be immediately pardoned, for he was a most efficient officer and highly esteemed by Lord Wellington.

To the consternation of the army this was not the case ; Ramsay remained for three weeks in arrest and Lord Wellington refused to recommend him for promotion. In vain did the Commander-in-Chief's intimates intercede for Ramsay, and the General of his Division write warmly on his behalf ; it almost seemed to make matters worse. For Lord Wellington was following a course of duty which was against his personal inclination, and the remonstrances of Ramsay's well-wishers were but further stabs to what he was undergoing.

Much sympathy has been extended to Ramsay, and none to Lord Wellington, for no one seems to have realized that he also was suffering. It was not pleasant to run the gauntlet of his army's good opinion, and treat with apparent harshness an officer whom he personally liked, yet his "well-known partiality for Ramsay",² only seemed to render him more obdurate, lest his feelings should make him yield against his

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. X, p. 539.*

² *Sir Herbert Maxwell, Vol. I, p. 325.*

principles. For it was a principle which was at stake ; from his point of view Ramsay had disobeyed orders, and the Commander-in-Chief conceived he had but one course to pursue. To have yielded to entreaties, as he must have longed to do, would have been to sacrifice a principle to an emotion.

The world in almost every case has judged him to have been in the wrong over this affair, but a man's judge is not the world's opinion, but his own conscience.

There were one or two exceptions to the censure passed on Lord Wellington. The Duke of York upheld him—“ . . . The Duke ”, wrote Colonel Torrens, “ desires me to say that he entirely concurs in the propriety and necessity of your decision.”¹

Gleig, too, considers that “ his treatment of Captain Ramsay . . . though severe, was just ”.²

The affair soon blew over so far as Lord Wellington was concerned, though it is said that Ramsay never got over his sense of having been unjustly treated. He was, however, returned to duty at the end of three weeks, and in the December operations Lord Wellington mentioned him in Despatches. Ramsay was afterwards killed at Waterloo, where he rendered distinguished service.

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VIII, p. 272.*

² *Gleig, p. 291.*

Chapter Sixteen

SAN SEBASTIAN

BATTLE OF THE PYRENEES PASSAGE OF THE BIDASSOA BATTLES OF THE NIEVELLE AND THE NIVE

You perish old churl cried Britannia inflamed
To Neptune as anxious she looked o'er the sea
My Arthur has fought, and you might be ashamed
To keep the details of his glory from me.

Bright Goddess, he answered oh blame not in thought
Old Neptune who glories in seeing you blest
A Sparrow I sent to make known he had fought
To Fancy I thought I might leave all the rest.*

THOUGH in highest spirits at his recent victory, Lord Wellington was now beginning to feel a little reaction and Larpen^t notices that on June 28th he "seemed knocked up . . . ate little or nothing, looked anxious, and slept nearly all the time of sitting after dinner".¹

His anxieties though eased were by no means ended by the Battle of Vitoria. There were still the forts of San Sebastian and Pamplona to be taken before it would be safe to advance any further ; whilst the lofty heights of the Pyrenees barred his entry into France.

¹ *Larpent, Vol. I, p. 260.*

* Rhyme of the times referring to the actions in the Pyrenees. News of the fighting had been carried home by the cutter *Sparrow*, but Lord Wellington's Despatches followed later in the brig *Fancy*, and in the interim the public were kept in anxiety and suspense as to what had really happened.

Accordingly, therefore, he stretched his army across the Franco-Spanish frontier, lay siege to San Sebastian at the one end, blockaded Pamplona at the other, whilst the main part of the army in the centre of the line occupied the passes of the Pyrenees and covered those operations.

For the next few months the theatre of war lay in these rugged mountains through which Lord Wellington's army fought its way doggedly step by step, until at last it stood upon the soil of France.

On July 25th Soult made his first attempt to dislodge the Allies from across his frontier and heavy fighting took place at Roncesvalles and in the Maya Pass when the British were defeated and driven back.

This was the beginning of the Battle of the Pyrenees, which lasted several days and was spent by Lord Wellington in galloping from one point to another of his mountainous position, often in danger of surprise and capture, but gathering up as he went the scattered threads of combat, and weaving them into the pattern of ultimate victory.

On July 27th as he was riding down the valley of the Lanz in search of Picton's* Division, and trying to fit together the various pieces of his jig-saw puzzle, he learned at Ostiz that Picton had had to fall back and take up a position on some heights before Pamplona, a piece of news which caused him to dash forward at racing speed. But a little further on, at the village of Sarouren, he was checked by the spectacle of a large French force in movement along the summits of the mountains with its right towards the Ostiz road. This

* Picton, Sir Thomas, Lieutenant-General, 1758-1815. In command of the 3rd Division during the Peninsular War. Served in Belgium in 1815, and was killed at Waterloo. Picton was a grand soldier of the rough and ready type and no respecter of persons. He was one of Lord Wellington's best generals, and by him highly appreciated; "a rough foul-mouthed devil as ever lived" was Wellington's designation of him, "but he always behaved extremely well; no man could do better in different services I assigned to him . . ." (Stanhope, *Conversations with the Duke of Wellington*, p. 69).

meant that the Allied troops in the valley of the Lanz were intercepted, and must at all costs be prevented from taking the Ostiz road.

There was no time to be lost, for the French had almost reached Sarouren.

Flinging himself out of the saddle and resting his writing materials on the parapet of a bridge, Lord Wellington swiftly wrote fresh orders for the disposition of his oncoming troops, tossed them to Lord Fitzroy-Somerset (the only aide-de-camp to survive his rapid pace), then quickly remounting, turned his horse up the mountain towards Picton's position, just as the French entered Sarouren and came clattering over the bridge where he had lately been standing. It was indeed a narrow shave.

The army towards which he travelled was as yet hidden from his view, and there were several steep heights to be scaled and a valley to be crossed before he could reach it.

And whilst his horse ate up the intervening distance, the Divisions of Picton and Cole stood at bay upon the Heights of Huarte and Villalba, tired out with fighting and retreating, and perhaps also a little dispirited, for they lacked the inspiration of the presence of their Chief.

Then suddenly the foremost battalions espied him, toiling up the mountain towards them, and a cry of triumph rent the air. It was taken up by the nearest regiments, ran along the line, and as the glad news of his arrival permeated the assembled army, swelled into "that stern appalling shout which the British soldier is wont to give upon the edge of battle, and which no enemy ever heard unmoved".¹

And he knowing all that he meant to them reined up on a summit and let them gaze their fill.

But someone else had seen him too and heard that glad triumphant shout which was anything but music to his ears, for Soult with his army stood upon the opposite ridge, and for a while the two great Commanders looked upon each other.

¹ *Napier, Vol. V, p. 226.*

For the Allies' defeat was now impossible, and with renewed vigour they bared their teeth and laid about them. "I never saw such fighting . . .",¹ declared Lord Wellington.

But an artillery officer speaks of "our noble commander's towering spirit and genius",² without which perhaps the fighting during those arduous days would have had a different ending.

And yet on three occasions his army might have lost him.

At Sarouren he narrowly escaped capture.

Then on the 27th, whilst directing operations from a hill which was the object of continuous attacks, he was in the centre of the hottest fighting, "exposed repeatedly, within close musket range: but here", says Sherer, "as at Vittoria (*sic*) where . . . he rode through the fire of eighty guns . . . here as there God covered his head . . ."³

And on the last day's fighting he was nearly taken.

He had [says Napier] carried with him towards Echallar half a company of the forty-third as an escort, and placed a sergeant named Blood, with a party to watch in front while he examined his maps. The French being close at hand sent a detachment to cut the party off; and such was the nature of the ground that their troops, rushing on at speed, would infallibly have fallen upon Wellington, if Blood . . . seeing the danger, had not with surprising activity, leaping rather than running down the precipitous rocks, given him notice: yet the French arrived in time to send a volley of shot after him as he galloped away.⁴

The fighting which had been raging furiously in all parts of the line ended on August the 2nd when, foiled at all points to drive the Allies from their position across his front, Soult relinquished the attempt, and retired into France.

It was not until the middle of August that Lord Wellington's despatches arrived in England. They were carried by the Prince of Orange who sailed on the brig *Fancy*. His arrival was hailed with great relief by the British public, who had

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. X, p. 597.

² *Sir A. Frazer*, p. 225.

³ *Sherer, Military Memoirs*, Vol. II, pp. 256, 257.

⁴ *Napier*, Vol. V, p. 248.

been alarmed by adverse reports which had trickled in concerning the fighting in the Pyrenees and before San Sebastian. "The news of your late victories, of which you made me the bearer, has created the greatest sensation here," wrote the Prince to Lord Wellington on August 16th, "the *Sparrow* cutter having brought very alarming reports as to our loss before St. Sebastian and in the battle of the 28th. The Regent is quite delighted with the manner in which the troops behaved. . . ."

The next triumph of Lord Wellington's army was the capture of San Sebastian on September 8th.

It had, however, a tragic ending, for the whole town was eventually destroyed by fire, and many innocent women and children and non-combatants perished in the flames.

The fire was part of the defensive operations of the French who had deliberately ignited certain houses near the breach and certain streets of the town to add to the difficulties of the storming troops.

Unfortunately the fire did not confine itself to the scene of military operations as the French had intended, for the wind took a hand, and the flames spread, until the whole place became a blazing conflagration and hardly a house was left standing.

The fire of San Sebastian was by the malicious minded attributed to deliberate intention on the part of the British, and Lord Wellington's enemies used it as a whip to lay upon his back.

At this particular period, there was bad blood between the British General and the Spanish War Minister, and the latter made the fire an excuse to stir up an anti-British party in Spain.

The calumnies against the British troops for their conduct at San Sebastian had reached such a height [wrote Henry Wellesley* to his brother], that upon talking over the subject with Major Smith I requested him to make out a plain statement of what had occurred, which has

* He had succeeded his elder brother as British Minister in Spain in 1812, when Lord Wellesley returned to England to become Foreign Minister.

been published in the "Conciso", and has produced a good effect. If you should disapprove this, I can only say that I am to blame, and not Major Smith. In fact, if the object of these calumnies were not to injure you in the public estimation, I should not think them of so much importance; but as a proof that this is the object, the "Duende de los Cafées", the editor of which holds an employment under the Minister of War, and receives his instructions from him, yesterday more than insinuated that you had issued the order for the sacking of San Sebastian.¹

Deeply hurt and indignant at the injustice of these libels against himself and the officers of his army, which reached him from all sides, Lord Wellington at last sent a long and detailed official denial to the British Minister at Cadiz. "I should have wished", he stated in the course of his letter, "to adopt another mode of justifying the officers concerned . . . but as there is no redress by the law for a libel, I must be satisfied with that which is in my hands."²

The French garrison of San Sebastian knew perfectly well the cause of the fire, and did not attempt to lay it at the door of the British.

An English officer who had been wounded and taken prisoner during the siege and lay in the military hospital at San Sebastian, was kept well informed of the French defensive measures.

I learned . . . [says he] the nature of the intrenchments made in the rear of the breach, and likewise that a great quantity of *combustible materials* had been placed in the houses around and adjoining it . . . When the successive accounts of the progress of the fire in the town was communicated to the inmates of the hospital, a savage and exulting laugh would be heard from the officers who happened at the moment to be present, visiting their wounded comrades.³

But though they did not set fire to San Sebastian, it is to be regretted that the behaviour of the storming troops was just as bad as it had been at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz,

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VIII, p. 292.*

² *Dispatches, Vol. XI, p. 171.*

³ *Peninsular Sketches, Vol. II, p. 220.*

and acts of terrible violence were committed by the bad characters amongst the storming soldiers. In vain did the officers try to control this disorder, they were as powerless as a paper boat against an oncoming tidal wave.

The resolution of the troops to throw off discipline [says Napier] was quickly made manifest. A British staff-officer was pursued with a volley of small arms and escaped with difficulty from men who mistook him for the provost-marshal . . . a Portuguese adjutant who endeavoured to prevent some wickedness was put to death in the market place . . . and though many officers exerted themselves to preserve order and many men were well conducted, the rapine and violence commenced by villains spread . . . ^{1*}

Anyone who came near San Sebastian was liable to become a victim of the plunderers and the Master of an English ship taking a stroll round the town was soon robbed of his coat, his shoes and stockings, and his money. "What shall I do?" asked the disconsolate man. "Why," replied a British officer, "if you wish to keep your shirt, you had better return to your ship." ²

The only people who were immune in San Sebastian were the French, for the one decent feeling capable of penetrating the rough hides of the most hardened sinners was chivalry to the enemy. The most degraded British plunderer would not have touched a Frenchman. Indeed, one of the accusations made against the British troops by the anti-British party in Cadiz was that of kindness to the enemy, a charge to which Lord Wellington gladly assented.

In regard to the charge of kindness to the enemy [he observes], I am afraid it is but too well founded; and that till it is positively ordered

¹ Napier, Vol. V, p. 278. ² Frazer, *Peninsular Letters*, p. 249.

* Though no shadow of excuse can exist for such conduct, it may be stated that the Spanish in San Sebastian had made common cause with the French against those who were fighting to free their town for them. "The whole of Spain", says Schaumann, "re-echoed with the tale of the barbarity shown to the Spanish by the English troops on this occasion, but no word was said about the treachery of the Spaniards in the town" (*On the Road with Wellington*, p. 389).

by authority . . . that all enemy's troops in a place taken by storm shall be put to death, it will be difficult to prevail upon British officers and soldiers to treat an enemy, when their prisoners, otherwise than well.¹

But though proud of his army for the above good quality and ready to defend it against false accusation, Lord Wellington was justly incensed at the abominable behaviour of part of it in San Sebastian.

I do not know how long my temper will last [he broke out in desperation to his brother Henry] . . . I do not know whether the conduct of the soldiers in plundering San Sebastian or the libels of the *Xefe Politico* and *Duende*, made me most angry.²

Whilst attention was centred on San Sebastian, Soult profited by the occasion to launch his second attack on the Allied positions across his frontier, and on August 30th drove against that part of the line which was held by the Spanish troops who, to Lord Wellington's great satisfaction, gave a good account of themselves.

The enemy . . . [he observes in his official despatch] . . . made a most desperate attack along the whole front of the position of the Spanish troops, on the heights of San Marcial. They were beat back . . . in the most gallant style by the Spanish troops whose conduct was equal to that of any troops that I have ever seen engaged . . .³

There was, however, a moment in the fight when the Spanish General, fancying the task too big for his army, sent an A.D.C. to Lord Wellington to beg assistance from the British. But Lord Wellington would have none of it, for he intended this battle for the Spaniards, and even as the messenger arrived he perceived that the French were on the point of retreating. Handing his glass to the Spanish aide-de-camp, he advised him to satisfy himself of the fact, and to withdraw the request for support. "Why", said the Spaniard, ". . . they do seem to be retiring." "Well", said Lord Wellington, ". . . if I send you the English troops

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. XI, pp. 174, 175.

² *Dispatches*, Vol. XI, p. 186. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

you ask for, they will win the battle ; but as the French are already in retreat you may as well win it for yourselves.”¹

The English General’s advice was taken, and the Spaniard galloped off to share in his country’s glory.

Lord Wellington as Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish army was nursing it with almost parental care, and had given the position of San Marcial to the Spaniards as an opportunity for distinguishing themselves.

In spite of being a foreigner his relations with the personnel of the Spanish army were excellent, especially with the rank and file. “It is remarkable enough,” observes Larpent, “but the fact is, that Lord Wellington is very popular with the common Spanish soldiers . . .”²

Yet perhaps it was not so strange after all, for he cared for them as no one had cared for them before, remembered that they were human beings with human needs, and did not expect them to fight in rags and tatters and on empty stomachs.

The Spanish Government, however, showed no such consideration for its soldiers, and the very day on which Lord Wellington reported their good conduct he was also protesting to the Spanish War Minister against the shameful neglect of these same soldiers.

“ . . . I entreat your Excellency [he wrote] to request the Regency to consider in what a situation they place me, who am obliged to urge these brave soldiers to exertion, and to make them meet the enemy in the field, at the very moment that I know they are starving ; and that, for the want of proper arrangements, there are no means of taking care of them when they are wounded.”³

The trouble which for some time had been brewing up between Lord Wellington and the Spanish War Office was now drawing rapidly to a climax. There had of late been a new War Minister and a change of Government, the latter containing a strong anti-British party, one of whose chief

¹ *Stanhope*, p. 22.

² *Larpent*, Vol. III, p. 177.

³ *Dispatches*, Vol. XI, pp. 73, 74.

aims was to remove the Englishman from the head of their armies.

Lord Wellington's position finally became untenable, for the new Government wished to repudiate the agreement under which he had accepted the command of the Spanish armies, and he was forced to resign.

Fortunately for Spain this was only a temporary measure, for the patriotic party immediately set to work to bring the Government to their senses, and the matter was submitted to a Council of State.

I am happy to tell you [wrote Henry Wellesley to his brother on November 11th] that the Council of State have given a most satisfactory opinion upon the question relative to your command. They have declared that nothing could be more injurious to the cause than your relinquishment of the command, which must not be admitted on any account, and that whatever conditions were agreed upon with you should be strictly and scrupulously adhered to.¹

'Bad Spaniards' was the War Minister's reply to the Council of State; nevertheless it was the 'bad Spaniards' who won the day, for they forced the question to an issue in the Cortes, put it to the vote and on November 30th Lord Wellington was re-established in the Command on the conditions under which he had first accepted it.

After Soult's second attack at the end of August there was an interim of two months without any fighting, during which period the rival armies remained politely looking at each other, their outposts in some places divided only by the breadth of the Bidassoa.

Our piquets [says Gleig] were stationed on the rise of the Spanish hills; those of the French on the faces of their own mountains; whilst the advanced sentinels were divided only by the river, which measured, in many places, not more than thirty yards across. But the French, whatever their faults may be [he continues], are a noble enemy. The most perfect understanding consequently prevailed between them and us, by which, not only the sentries continued free from danger, but

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. VIII, pp. 355, 356.*

the piquets themselves were safe from wanton surprisal; no attack upon an outpost being . . . thought of unless it was meant to be followed up by a general engagement.¹

I always encouraged this [said the Duke in after years], the killing a poor fellow of a vidette or carrying off a post could not influence the battle, and I always when I was going to attack sent to tell them to get out of the way.²

On October 7th Lord Wellington re-opened the fighting, and crossing the Bidassoa, attacked the French in their strongly intrenched mountain positions on the other side of the river, the action being preceded by the usual thunderstorm which heralded most of Lord Wellington's victorious advances.

Long before daylight on the 7th, the Commander-in-Chief was astir amongst his troops, and as they marched to take up their battle positions a young officer toiling up the face of a mountain got his first sight of the great British General.

As we ascended [says he], . . . I saw for the first time, the immortal Wellington. He was accompanied by the Spanish General, Alava, Lord Fitzroy Somerset, and Major, afterwards Colonel Freemantle. He was very stern and grave looking; he was in deep meditation, so long as I kept him in view, and spoke to no one. His features were bold, and I saw much decision of character in his expression. He rode a knowing-looking thorough-bred horse, and wore a gray overcoat, Hessian boots, and a large cocked hat.³

The Crossing of the Bidassoa was followed by several days of mountain fighting, the most outstanding action in the series being the fight for the Great Rhune Mountain, the highest point in that part of the Pyrenees.

By October 10th the fighting was ended, the French positions won, and the enemy driven back from the vicinity of the Bidassoa.

Spain, with the exception of Pamplona, and a French force on the east coast, under Suchet,* was now entirely free from

¹ *The Subaltern*, p. 44.

² *Croker Papers*, Vol. I, p. 401.

³ *Gronow*, Vol. I, p. 2.

* Suchet, Louis Gabriel-Marshall, Duc d'Albufera, 1772-1826.

the enemy, and Lord Wellington established his headquarters at the frontier town of Vera, remaining there until the fall of Pamplona on October 31st enabled him to move forward.

On November 10th he again attacked, and the Battle of the Nivelle was fought.

In this battle [says Napier] Soult was driven in a few hours from a mountain position which he had been fortifying for three months . . . all his field-magazines at St Jean de Luz and Espelette fell into the hands of the victors ; and fifty-one pieces of artillery were taken . . .¹

The Allied army were now in France, and Lord Wellington took up his headquarters at St. Jean de Luz.

Before entering the country he had issued a proclamation of protection to the inhabitants and a warning to his troops concerning their conduct, officers being enjoined to keep their men in order, and the severest penalties enforced for plundering.

It did not take the British long to settle down happily in their new quarters and soon they were on the best of terms with their 'enemy' hosts :

. . . The natives of this part of the country [wrote the Commander-in-Chief to Lord Bathurst] are not only reconciled to the invasion, but wish us success, afford us all the supplies in their power, and exert themselves to get for us intelligence. In no part of Spain have we been better, I might say so well, received . . . The inhabitants, who had at first left their habitations, have in general returned to them, many of them at the risk of their lives, having been fired at by the French sentries at the outposts ; and they are living very comfortably and quietly with our soldiers cantoned in their houses.²

Perfect harmony prevailed along the battle front unless an action were in progress, and in one part of the line British officers calmly breakfasted, "within about fifty yards of the French sentry, and within about two hundred of the whole French picket, who by one volley might have broken all their cups and saucers, if not their heads."³

¹ Napier, Vol. V, p. 378. ² Dispatches, Vol. XI, pp. 303, 304.

³ Larpent, Vol. II, p. 179.

But years of fighting each other had made the French and English excellent friends, a friendship which was cemented by the good behaviour of the British troops on French territory.

This happy state of affairs, it need hardly be said, did not extend to the Spaniards ; an army of half-starved men with a bitter grievance against the French, and smarting under the injuries which they hoped to wipe out in bloody retaliation.

As was only to be expected, on entering France they had commenced an orgy of rapine and plunder, for which conduct Lord Wellington sent them back into Spain, thus depriving himself of 20,000 fighting men at a critical moment of the campaign.

Though deprecating their excesses, the Commander-in-Chief realized that there was every excuse for them from the Spanish point of view.

They are [he wrote to Lord Bathurst] in so miserable a state, that it is really hardly fair to expect that they will refrain from plundering a beautiful country, into which they enter as conquerors ; particularly, adverting to the miseries which their own country has suffered from its invaders. I cannot, therefore, venture to bring them back into France, unless I can feed and pay them . . .¹

This humane decision of Lord Wellington's was greatly detrimental to his military plans, and checked his forward progress. "If", he continued to Lord Bathurst, "I could now bring forward 20,000 good Spaniards, paid and fed, I should have Bayonne. If I could bring forward 40,000, I do not know where I should stop."²

The full extent of this sacrifice in the cause of humanity can only be grasped by a realization of Lord Wellington's position at this particular period. He had only as yet penetrated into a small corner of France. Another river, the Nive, was barring his further progress ; he was, says Napier, inclosed as it were in a net between the Nive, the sea, Bayonne, and the Pyrenees . . . to pass the Nive and free his flanks was indispensable

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. XI, p. 306.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 306, 307.

if he would draw any profit from his victory of the 10th of November . . . yet at that crisis he divested himself of twenty-five thousand Spanish soldiers !¹

Apart from the weakening of Lord Wellington's army by the loss of the Spaniards, the weather also took a hand against him, and on November 11th the rain set in and continued remorselessly until the heavy clay soil of the country where the Allies now found themselves became an impassable quagmire, in which the infantry sank to their knees, the horses to their girths, and in which the artillery could not move at all.

The army being thus temporarily paralysed, there was nothing to do but to remain in cantonments until circumstances permitted them to move; a pleasant little holiday for those who had not the weight of the campaign resting upon their shoulders.

The officers spent their days hunting and fishing, and at night would return to a good dinner, and afterwards sit down to their grog and cigars before a comfortable fire.

Even Lord Wellington managed to snatch a few days' hunting, and would be seen in the sky-blue coat and black cap of the Salisbury hunt, riding out to his favourite sport, "in the best of spirits, genial, and *sans cérémonie*; in fact, just like a genuine country squire and fox-hunter".²

But he had to pay for his days of pleasure, and he complained to Larpent that he was kept up "reading Courts-martial until twelve o'clock at night or one in the morning; and this every night".³

Nevertheless he seemed to thrive on it, for Larpent observes that, "Nearly all our great men except Lord Wellington have been ill."⁴

The Allies were now in the land of plenty which perhaps accounted for the indisposition of some of the 'great ones', for good living was the order of the day and the hosts of

¹ *Napier, Vol. V, p. 414.*

³ *Larpent, Vol. II, p. 271.*

² *Schaumann, p. 398.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

the army vied with each other as to the relative merits of their tables.

Even the Commander-in-Chief's had now gained a reputation, a distinction it had been previously lacking.

Without joking [says Larpent] Lord Wellington's table is now very good in every respect ; and I think his aides-de-camp will be ill with excess, who have this daily fare (unless there is a move), especially if the roads remain too bad for exercise. Lord Wellington has now three cooks, and an English and Spanish chief [*sic chef*] share the command, and by dividing the days, vie with each other.¹

This was quite a new state of affairs, for Lord Wellington's indifference to the pleasures of the table was proverbial. Perhaps someone had given him a hint that as Commander-in-Chief his table was not quite up to standard, and with characteristic thoroughness he had set about to remedy it.

But though indifferent to culinary matters on his own account, "about no point was he more particular than that his troops should be properly fed, and their food so dressed as to be at once nutritious and palatable".² His General Orders contain many allusions to this subject and indeed on every other subject concerning his soldiers' welfare, for where they were concerned no detail escaped his minutest scrutiny.

The army's little holiday came to an end on December 9th, and in the early morning of that day Lord Wellington left St. Jean de Luz, and was seen soon after daybreak riding through Araantz with his staff, wearing "a light drab coloured cloak, which made him very conspicuous".³

Things now began to hum, and presently the British outposts—almost with reluctance—were advancing to drive in the outposts of their friendly enemies.

The etiquette of the outposts, however, was maintained whenever possible, and during a lull in the fighting on the night of December 10th, Harry Smith and a French officer exchanged the usual courtesies.

¹ *Larpent, Vol. II, p. 282.*

² *Gleig, p. 225.*

³ *Diary of a Commissariat Officer, p. 269.*

I was posting the night's sentries [says the former] when I saw a French officer doing the same. I went towards him, and we civilly greeted each other. I said I wished to speak to him. He came up with the greatest confidence and good humour. I showed him my vedette, and then remarked that his was too far in advance and might create an alarm at night when relieving. He said he did not see that, but to please me, if I would point out where I wished he should be, he would immediately move him—which he did. He presented his little flask of excellent French brandy, of which I took a sup, and we parted in perfect amity.¹

Such scenes, however, were but brief interludes in five days of murderous fighting, in which those so well fitted to be friends were engaged in tearing out each other's lives.

This series of actions, constituting the Battle of the Nive, began with the crossing of that river by a portion of the army under General Sir Rowland Hill on the 9th, and finished with the bloody combat of St. Pierre on the 13th, in which "five thousand men were killed or wounded in three hours upon a space of one mile square".²

This last was a triumph for General Hill, who, cut off by the rise of the river on the night of the 12th from the rest of the army, was attacked on the following morning by the whole of Soult's forces before Lord Wellington could join him.

But the best of the Peninsular Generals was equal to his job, and by the time the supporting troops reached him the battle was won.

"Hill, the day is your own,"³ exclaimed his Chief, arriving at the moment of Hill's triumph, and in the ecstasy of the moment catching his general warmly by the hand.

So ended the operations of the Nive. "The enemy", says Kincaid, "seemed quite satisfied with what they had got; and offered us no further molestation, but withdrew within their works."⁴

¹ *Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, pp. 155, 156.*

² *Napier, Vol. V, p. 415.* ³ *Life of Lord Hill, p. 267.*

⁴ *Kincaid, Adventures, p. 139.*

Chapter Seventeen

FULFILMENT

ORTHEZ

TOULOUSE

For there are poets wakening into song
 And soldiers seeking peace on earth again.

EDWARD DAVISON.

THE British headquarters at St. Jean de Luz were singularly free from red tape and humbug.

From Lord Wellington downward [observes Larpent] there is mighty little. Everyone works hard, and does his business. The substance and not the form is attended to : in dress, and many other respects, I think almost too little so. The maxim, however, of our Chief, is, "Let everyone do his duty well, and never let me hear of any difficulties about anything" and that is all he cares about.¹

In Lord Wellington's own household his staff lived together on the most friendly terms.

They had [says Gleig] many school-boy tricks ; among others, that of giving nick-names, at which nobody took offence. "Where is Slender Billy ?" said Lord Fitzroy Somerset one day, looking round the table, and apparently missing somebody. "Here I am, Fitzroy," replied the Prince of Orange, "what do you want?"²

The presence of Lord Wellington by no means checked his young men's fun or prevented them from saying or doing whatever occurred to them.

The visitors, however, were more ceremonious, and

¹ *Larpent*, Vol. II, p. 222.

² *Gleig*, p. 223.



“FREE FROM RED TAPE OR HUMBUG.”

conversation at the table of the Commander of the forces laboured, like conversation at the table of the Sovereign, under some restraints. All who sat there, that is to say, ordinary guests, waited till the cue was given, and were then content for the most part to follow, not to originate, discussion. Lord Wellington himself, on the contrary, seemed to give free utterance to whatever thought happened to pass through his mind. Whether home politics, or the affairs of Europe, or the state and prospects of his own army . . . out came his opinions with as much freedom as if he were discussing a stage-play or events in history.¹

Even the presence of certain Frenchmen at his table known to be spies did not check the apparent freedom of the Commander-in-Chief's conversation, or cause him to be guarded in his remarks.

But why should I? [he observed]. It was a matter of indifference to me what they saw or heard. I got a good deal of information out of them which was useful to me. I didn't care what information they carried back to Soult, because I knew it would be of no use to him . . . spies abound in every camp. I was aware of many in mine, but as to hanging them, that never entered into my head. If I could not manage at all times to render their tittle-tattle worthless to the enemy, I should have been unfit to command an army.²

Though not actually fighting, the Allied army was kept more or less on the alert, and Lord Wellington frequently left Headquarters on a call from different parts of his front, during which periods office work had an uncomfortable habit of mounting up.

. . . On Friday night all our warriors returned home to their respective quarters, and the Commander-in-Chief to his papers [wrote Larpent after one of these little jaunts]. The latter had so increased upon him in his five days' absence, that he was quite overwhelmed; and when I went in with a great bundle to add to them, he put his hands before his eyes and said, "Put them on that table; and do not say anything about them now, or let me look at them at all."³

Business, however, did not entirely monopolize Lord Wellington's thoughts, and no press of affairs ever made him neglect the niceties of the toilet.

¹ *Gleig*, p. 214.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Larpent*, Vol. II, p. 234.

He is [says Larpent] remarkably neat, and most particular in his dress . . . He is well made, knows it, and is willing to set off to the best what nature has bestowed . . . He cuts the skirts of his own coats shorter, to make them look smarter; and only a short time since I found him discussing the cut of his half-boots, and suggesting alterations to his servant, when I went in upon business.¹

Events were now brewing up in Europe for the finish of the Napoleonic régime.

The failure of the Russian campaign in 1812 had sounded the first knell of warning to Napoleon that the sun of his power was about to set. Followed in succession the throwing off of his yoke by Prussia, Austria and Sweden, and his defeat at Leipzig in 1813 when the French were driven back across the Rhine.

The driving of the French out of Spain by Lord Wellington and his invasion of France was a further realization to Buonaparte that the Hour of Fate was drawing near, and the advisability of negotiation entered his mind. Accordingly in February of 1814 a Congress consisting of representatives of the Allies and the French Government met at Chatillon to discuss terms of peace.

There was, however, no armistice, for Napoleon was by no means at the end of his tether and still inclined to be the dictator rather than the negotiator.

Nevertheless the seeds of peace were sown and Lord Wellington, who had striven for six long years in this great cause, saw at last the blossoming of his labours.

Early in February a significant visitor arrived at his Headquarters, whose advent indicated which way the wind was blowing. This was the Duc d'Angoulême, husband of the daughter of the ill-fated Louis XVI, and a nephew of Louis XVIII, the legitimate King of France.*

This personage, in company with the exiled Court of

¹ *Larpent, Vol. III, p. 6.*

* The Duc d'Angoulême was the son of the Comte d'Artois, the younger brother of Louis XVI, thus he married his cousin.

France, had taken refuge in England after the French Revolution, and now that the pendulum was swinging back again, had returned to France with a view to stirring up the Royalists and striking a blow against Napoleon.

Headquarters were much intrigued to catch a glimpse of the 'Royal Tiger',* as he was called, and one night at dinner at Lord Wellington's, Larpent saw him with his attendant gentleman, the Comte Dumas.

Lord Wellington was in his manner droll towards them [says Larpent]. As they went out, we drew up on each side, and Lord Wellington put them first; they bowed and scraped right and left so oddly, and so actively, that he followed with a face much nearer a grin than a smile.¹

The arrival of the Duc d'Angoulême created a difficult situation for the British Commander-in-Chief, though had he arrived some months earlier his presence would have been more than welcome.

"... If I were a Prince of the House of Bourbon", Lord Wellington had written in the previous November, after his entry into France, "nothing should prevent me from now coming forward, not in a good house in London, but in the field in France; and if Great Britain would stand by him, I am certain he would succeed."²

The situation, however, was different now, for the Allies had entered into peace negotiations with Napoleon, and though Lord Wellington believed in hereditary monarchy he believed still more in peace.

He had counselled it to Lord Bathurst in the preceding autumn, in that same letter in which he had suggested that it was the moment for the arrival of a member of the House of Bourbon.

¹ *Larpent, Vol. II, p. 288.*

² *Dispatches, Vol. XI, p. 306.*

* "All odd strangers", says Larpent, "who came to headquarters here have been long called tigers. Of course we now have the Royal Tiger! This is a headquarters joke . . ." (*Journal of Larpent, Vol. II, p. 283*).

I recommend to your Lordship [he wrote] to make peace with him [Napoleon] if you can acquire all the objects which you have a right to expect. All the powers of Europe require peace . . . and it would not do to found a new system of war upon the speculations of any individual on what he sees and learns in one corner of France. If Buonaparte becomes moderate, he is probably as good a Sovereign as we can desire in France . . . ”¹

Lord Wellington made it clear to the Duc d'Angoulême from the start that he was not fighting a partisan war, but only for the peace of Europe, and though he was ready to assist the Bourbons, or anyone else to get the better of Napoleon as long as they were at war with him, should peace be declared, all help to them would automatically cease. “I beg the inhabitants will weigh this matter well before they raise a standard against Napoleon and involve themselves in hostilities,” he stated in a letter of instructions to Marshal Beresford, who had been detached with a corps to occupy the pro-Royalist city of Bordeaux.²

Nevertheless, on the appearance of the Duc d'Angoulême in their city the Royalist party at Bordeaux threw discretion to the winds, the Mayor proclaimed Louis XVIII King, and issued proclamations urging the people to rally under the white banner,* some of which even purported to be in Lord Wellington's name.

This was going a bit too far, and Lord Wellington wrote a strong letter of protest to the Duc d'Angoulême who expected the British Commander-in-Chief's support in establishing his Government.

I occupied Bordeaux [said he] with a detachment of the army in the course of my operations, and certain persons in the city of Bordeaux, contrary to my advice, thought proper to proclaim King Louis XVIII. These persons have made no exertions whatever; they have not subscribed a shilling for the support of the cause, and they have not raised

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. XI, p. 305.*

² *Ibid., p. 558.*

* The Bourbon standard.

a single soldier ; and then because I do not extend the posts of the army under my command beyond what I think proper and convenient, and their properties and families are exposed, not on account of their exertions in the cause (for they have made none), but on account of their premature declaration contrary to my advice, I am to be blamed, and in a manner called to account . . .

I beg your Royal Highness to tell . . . all such persons, that no power on earth shall induce me to depart from what I conceive to be my duty towards the Sovereigns whom I am serving ; and that I will not risk even a company of infantry to save properties and families placed in a state of danger contrary to my advice and opinion.¹

The military scheme uppermost in Lord Wellington's mind at this particular period was the ousting of Soult from his headquarters at Bayonne, where he was as firmly embedded as an oyster in its shell.

The project presented difficulties.

Bayonne [says Napier], although a mean fortress, was at this period truly designated by Napoleon as one of the great bulwarks of France. Covered by an entrenched camp, which the deep country and inundations rendered nearly impregnable while held by an army, it could not be assailed . . .²

Between Lord Wellington, and protecting Bayonne, lay the Adour, a great river with a strong current, guarded by troops and gun-boats both above and below the town. Even were its crossing attempted the amount of boats and pontoons required would attract the enemy's attention and render the scheme abortive at the outset.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the difficulties, Lord Wellington intended to cross it, making the very difficulties subservient to his purpose.

Accordingly, therefore, he drew Soult's attention away from Bayonne by attacking him with the right of his army under Sir Rowland Hill, who after a series of successful actions, by the middle of February, had lured the French Commander

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. XI, pp. 608, 609.*

² *Napier, Vol. VI, p. 1.*

to a safe distance from Lord Wellington's proposed scene of operations.

The coast now being clear and the defenders of Bayonne lulled into a false security by the operations on their right, Lord Wellington proposed to put into execution that daring project "which", says Napier, "must always rank amongst the prodigies of war".¹

This carefully planned and cherished scheme had for its object the crossing of the Adour at its mouth and the establishment of a bridge of sufficient strength to pass across an army, with guns, stores and ammunition.

The bridge itself was to be laid upon sailing vessels of from 50 to 60 tons which were to enter the river at its mouth, and anchor head to stern across the river.

The very audacity of the operation was calculated to deceive the enemy; the natural hazards of the place alone were sufficient to render it safe from attack, for the swiftness of the current of the Adour at its mouth prohibited the use of ordinary pontoons, whilst the sand-banks which barred it, and the vicious surf beating into it from the sea, forbade the entrance of vessels of any size.

By February 19th all arrangements were complete except the weather, which was boisterous and squally, and the winds contrary and blowing into the Bay of St. Jean de Luz, where the naval vessels which were to co-operate with the land forces at the bridging of the Adour were assembled.

This state of affairs kept Lord Wellington in a ferment of anxiety. At four o'clock in the afternoon of the 19th he arrived back at St. Jean de Luz from operations on the right. Bursting with eagerness about his precious scheme, he seemed unable to feel bodily fatigue, and instead of dismounting at his own quarters went round immediately to confer with Admiral Penrose and Colonel Elphinstone, who had charge of the arrangements for crossing the Adour.

The next morning he was out before 7.30 on the harbour

¹ Napier, Vol. VI, p. 94.

wall looking at the sea. But the wind was blowing strongly right into the bay and not a ship could venture to stir.

If, however, he could not command the weather, Lord Wellington bent everything else to the force of his will.

“He banishes”, says Larpent, “the terms difficulty, impossibility, and responsibility, from his vocabulary.”¹ Even the lack of planks available for his bridge had not been allowed to hold up preparations; “there are all your platforms of your batteries which have been sent out, in case of siege,” he told the engineer officer in charge of operations. “Cut them all up”. “Then when we proceed with the siege, what is to be done!” said the officer. “Oh, work your guns in the sand until you can make new ones out of the pinewood near Bayonne.”²

The weather continuing unruly, Lord Wellington was obliged to return to the right of his army, leaving Sir John Hope and Admiral Penrose to carry out the Adour operations, which were successfully achieved in the face of appalling difficulties, and on February 25th Bayonne was invested.

While these things were happening, Lord Wellington with the right of his army was driving steadily forward, and by the 26th had arrived at Orthez, where he intended to bring Soult to an immediate action.

This intention, however, was delayed by the non-arrival of the 3rd Division. “Very well, Murray”, Harry Smith heard him say, “if the Division does not arrive in time, we must delay the attack till to-morrow. However, I must have a sleep.” And folding his little white cloak round him he lay down, saying, “Call me in time, Murray.”³

At daybreak the following morning the Allied army was moving into battle position, whilst from an old Roman camp on the top of a hill Lord Wellington surveyed Soult’s position and watched the assembling of his own forces.

Two divisions were in march to join the 3rd, which was

¹ *Larpent, Vol. II, p. 302.*

² *Ibid., p. 306.*

³ *Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, pp. 162, 163.*

already in position, but their point of union was a hazardous one, almost within cannon shot of the enemy. "Picton did not conceal his disquietude. Wellington, calm as the deepest sea, continued his observations without seeming to notice the dangerous position of his troops . . .".¹

Though eventually an Allied victory, the Battle of Orthez was by no means easily won: "With a subtle skill", says Napier, "did Soult take his ground of battle . . . fiercely and strongly did he fight . . .".²

There came even a moment which portended a Wellington defeat, a moment when Soult is said to have slapped his thigh and cried exultingly, "*At last I have him.*".³

He misjudged his opponent, however, who at the time of crisis was seen coming from the village of St. Boës, "walking his horse quietly, and chatting with some of the staff, just as if nothing of consequence was going on, although it was clear that his principal attack was partially repulsed".⁴

But the moment of danger quickly passed, for with one of his lightning flashes of inspiration Lord Wellington changed his plan of battle, the results of which swung the balance to his side, and the day was saved. By night Soult was in full retreat.

In this battle Lord Wellington was wounded in the thigh by a musket ball, which drove the hilt of his sword into his flesh, and caused a painful contusion. Fortunately he was not obliged to leave the field, though he was prevented from following the pursuit at his usual speed, and jumping hedges and enclosures as he generally did.

The casualty which caused him the deepest distress in this battle, was Lord March, who was so badly wounded that little hope was entertained of his recovery. So great was the Commander-in-Chief's anxiety for the son of his old Chief that the second night after the battle he rode back alone from

¹ Napier, Vol. VI, p. 103.

² Ibid., p. 116.

³ Ibid., p. 105.

⁴ *Twelve Years' Military Adventure*, Vol. II, p. 329.

St. Sever to visit him, in spite of his own wound and the fact that he had been riding all day in pursuit of the enemy.

About the middle of the night [records George Napier], as Dr. Hare was sitting dozing in a chair opposite Lord March's bed, who had fallen asleep, the door of the room gently opened and a figure in a white cloak and military hat walked up to the bed, drew the curtains quietly aside, looked steadily for a few seconds on the pale countenance before him, then leaned over, stooped his head, and pressed his lips on the forehead of Lord March, heaved a deep sigh, and turned to leave the room, when the doctor, who had anxiously watched every movement, beheld the countenance of *Wellington*! his cheeks wet with tears.¹*

Headquarters were now established for awhile at St. Sever, and on March 5th Larpent went to pay his respects to Lord Wellington and enquire about his wound. He found him busy writing; "he said he was better, and looked well enough".²

But a couple of days later, walking down to the bridge with him, Larpent noticed him

limp a little, and he said he was in rather more pain than usual, but it was nothing. At dinner yesterday [continues Larpent], he said he was laughing at General Alava having had a knock, and telling him it was all nonsense, and that he was not hurt, when he received . . . a worse one, in the same place himself. Alava said it was to punish him for laughing at him.³

Soult now retired towards Toulouse.

Lord Wellington followed, driving steadily forward, gaining golden opinions from the people of the country by his mild and courteous behaviour.

Arriving to dine with him at Galan on March 22nd, Larpent found him chatting comfortably by the fire with the Mayor of that place, whom he had invited to dinner and who had been an hour in the room before discovering that he was

¹ *Sir George Napier, pp. 246, 247.*

² *Larpent, Vol. III, p. 40.*

³ *Ibid., p. 41.*

* Lord March recovered and a few weeks later was able to join the army at Toulouse.

talking to the British Commander-in-Chief. Such friendly unassuming manners were in direct contrast to the French Generals Clausel and Harispe who had been there the night before, and had only ordered dinner to be prepared for themselves, and had not invited the Mayor to partake of his own hospitality, or thanked him, or taken the least notice of him. "He could not therefore believe that Lord Wellington was the enemy's General, having been so treated, as he said, 'like a dog' by his friends."¹

On March 28th Soult retired into Toulouse, and early on the same day the Allied Headquarters reached Seysses, which is within a league of that city.

The last phase of the Peninsular War had now been reached, and the stage set for the Grande Finale.

The Allied army, however, was not aware of this, and saw only a big town in front of them waiting to be taken, from which they were separated by a large river.

The affair did not look too easy. The city of Toulouse was in an ideal position to resist attack, being surrounded on three sides by the River Garonne and the Canal of Languedoc, whilst on the side not so protected, it was covered by the fortified suburb of San Michel, from whence ran the road to Carcassone by which Soult, in case of need, could fall back upon General Suchet's force which had worked its way up through the north-east frontier of Spain.

The town was also surrounded by an ancient wall with towers, and further protected on every avenue of approach by an elaborate system of fortifications which Soult had thrown up in its defence.

The first part of Lord Wellington's plan of attack consisted in crossing the Garonne which lay between his army and Toulouse; and on the 28th an attempt was made by throwing a bridge across the river six miles from the town. The rains, however, had so swollen the river that there were not enough pontoons to reach across at this point and the attempt had to

¹ *Larpent, Vol. III, p. 77.*

be abandoned. "Lord Wellington", says George Napier, "was furious. I never saw him in such a rage, and no wonder; for this unpardonable mistake was the cause of many days' delay . . ." ¹

The next trial was made on March 31st when the pontoons were laid farther south, and Sir Rowland Hill with two divisions and some Spaniards passed across. He was, however, checked by marshy ground which prohibited the transit of artillery, and had to be withdrawn.

At Grenade, north of Toulouse, on April 4th the next attempt was made and the 3rd, 4th and 6th Divisions under Beresford were passed over.

Beresford was now cut off from the rest of the army, and in order to keep him in heart Lord Wellington spent most of his time on that side of the river. "I used", said he, "to cross over every morning . . . and return at night. I thought the troops might be out of spirits at seeing themselves in a position so exposed, but not a bit—they didn't mind at all." ²

Not so happy, however, was the rest of the army, for the opposite banks were lined with French cavalry and Lord Wellington's daring methods of reconnoitring were only too well known.

On the morning of the 5th he went over in a small boat entirely unattended, and mounting a troop horse on the other side disappeared into the unknown. "Even General P____", says Larpent, "was a little uneasy, and sent about eight o'clock to know if he had come back safe." ³

Whilst the bridge was being laid Lord Wellington had been equally reckless, reconnoitring on the enemy's side in spite of their close proximity. Attended one day by only a couple of officers and concealing his General's hat with an oilskin,

he got into conversation with the French vidette, dismounted, got down

¹ *Sir George Napier*, p. 254.

² *Salisbury MS.* quoted by *Sir Herbert Maxwell*, Vol. I, p. 370.

³ *Larpent*, Vol. III, p. 121.

to the water-side, looked all about him, saw all he wished, and came away. I think [says Larpent], this was risking too much ; but no French soldier would have an idea of the commander of the allied forces going about thus with two attendants.¹

On another occasion when quite alone a French sentry had actually fired on him.

This, however, was entirely against outpost etiquette.

“ Pardon, monsieur,” said a French officer, running down to the river-side to apologise, “ c'est un nouveau.”

The kindness was acknowledged, and the two entered into conversation, which Lord Wellington kept up until he had seen and comprehended all that he was desirous of looking into. He then raised his hat and went away . . .²

On the 7th the floods abated, the bridge was once more laid, and shortly after daybreak on the 8th the Commander-in-Chief was down at the water-side to watch the passing across of the Spanish corps and Portuguese artillery ; “ about 8 o'clock Lord Wellington himself passed over leading his own horse, which he refused to let his orderly take ”.³

By evening the troops on this side of the river were within five miles of Toulouse.

The Battle of Toulouse was fought on April 10th, which was Easter Day.

The attack began at seven o'clock in the morning, and, as the two armies rushed upon each other's destruction, the church bells in Toulouse were ringing for the early Easter Mass.

It was a desperately fought battle, and at first the French had decidedly the best of it. Indeed, at one period matters for the Allies looked exceedingly black and Lord Wellington's staff kept coming up with fresh bad news.

“ Ha, by God, this won't do,” said the Commander-in-Chief, “ we must try something else.” We then saw [says Harry Smith] the heads

¹ *Larpent, Vol. III, p. 122.*

² *Gleig, p. 238.*

³ *Journal of a Commissariat Officer, p. 320.*

of the 4th and 6th Divisions coming into action immediately on the right flank of the enemy . . . in most gallant style, carrying redoubt after redoubt which were ably defended . . .¹

The tide of war was turned, and though the French resisted fiercely and some heavy fighting still ensued, they were driven steadily back from their position until, deeming further resistance useless, Soult withdrew his whole army behind the canal surrounding Toulouse, leaving the British commander master of the field.

Though beaten on the 10th, the French General was still full of fight and during the night made dispositions for fighting the next morning behind the canal.

Lord Wellington, however, had fixed his next attack for the 12th, for he wished to make fresh dispositions and bring up more artillery from his *parc* on the other side of the Garonne. Meanwhile, he sent his light cavalry to cut off Soult's communications with Suchet by the Carcassone road.

This clinched the matter for the French General, who had no wish to be shut up in Toulouse, and on the night of the 11th he abandoned the city and made good his escape, falling back by a forced march of twenty-two miles upon Villefranche.

It was his Grand Finale.

No sooner had Soult retired than Toulouse en masse declared for Louis XVIII, the white flag of the Bourbons was hoisted over the city, and the white cockade was everywhere in evidence.

The inhabitants now went mad with joy and everyone was crying—"Vivent les Anglais ! Vivent nos Libérateurs !",² and clamouring for a sight of Lord Wellington. "Où est Wellington ?, où est ce héros ?",³ and the Mayor with the Officers of the Town Guard, and some of the National Guard, with band playing and a large crowd of citizens went to the fortified entrance of the city to meet him.

But the 'hero' was not forthcoming, for owing to some

¹ *Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, pp. 176, 177, 178.*

² *Frazer, Peninsular Letters, p. 466.* ³ *Ibid.*

mistake in the arrangements he went in by another entrance and slipped into the city unobserved.

He was soon, however, tracked down to the Town Hall, where he showed himself at the window to a wildly enthusiastic crowd. Then quarters having been prepared for him at the Prefect's Palace, he was conducted thither by the Mayor's procession through streets of cheering inhabitants, being "rendered very conspicuous by the restiveness of his horse, which on entering the square reared on its hindlegs and literally danced over the ground".¹

That was to be a wonderful night in Toulouse, for during dinner at Lord Wellington's quarters, two messengers of Fate arrived from Paris bringing official news of the abdication of Napoleon, the restoration of Louis XVIII, and the return of Universal Peace.

A never-to-be-forgotten scene ensued, for when the toast to Louis XVIII had been duly honoured, General Alava leapt from his chair and with great warmth gave the health of Lord Wellington. 'El Libertador de España', 'Liberador de Portugal', 'La Libérateur de la France'. The room rang with his praises shouted in different tongues. This was followed by a spell of prolonged and frenzied cheering, "not", says Larpent, "by a regular three times three, but a cheering all in confusion for nearly ten minutes!"²

How terrible and impossible to be borne are those moments in life when we touch the apex of attainment, terrible in their immensity, overflowing and submerging the human heart.

And so it was with Lord Wellington now, and when he rose to return thanks he could not utter a word, but "looked round at the company with tears in his eyes, and calling for coffee, sat down again".³

After dinner he went to the theatre, the whole audience on his arrival springing to their feet whilst the orchestra gave 'God save the King'.

¹ *Journal of a Commissariat Officer*, p. 332.

² *Larpent, Vol. III*, p. 138.

³ *Gleig*, p. 240.



"THE LIBERATOR."

The play that night was "Richard Coeur de Lion", a play abounding with loyal passages and loyal songs; "nothing", observes Frazer who was present in the audience, "could equal the cheering of these passages, except the burst of applause which broke out when Lord Wellington showed himself or moved".¹

But that which was most intriguing to the general public and to those officers of Lord Wellington's army who had not yet heard the news from Paris, was the sight of a large white cockade upon his Lordship's hat which lay in a conspicuous place at the front of the box.

The mystery, however, was speedily solved for, "a person in black, attended by many candles, and having a paper in his hand, appeared in a side box struggling for room and utterance",² and having obtained both proceeded to read out the proclamation of King Louis XVIII and the new French Constitution.

So fell the curtain on Napoleon's reign.

¹ *Frazer, Peninsular Letters*, p. 468.

² *Ibid.*

Chapter Eighteen

SOME PLAY—MUCH WORK

Service is our destiny in life or death;
 Then let it be my choice, living to serve the living
 And be fretted uncomplainingly.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

THE messengers from Paris left Toulouse the night of their arrival, and went straight on to communicate the news of peace to Marshal Soult, who at first would not believe it. The despatches were not from his master, Buonaparte, and he wished to have further confirmation. He therefore demanded an armistice whilst he sought it. This Lord Wellington prudently refused to grant, but kept his troops in readiness for any emergency until he received Soult's submission to the Provisional Government of France;

... Any time given to Marshal Soult [he observes] and any appearance of an understanding between him and me, before he should have declared his submission to the Provisional Government, would have had the effect of keeping his army united, and would have afforded scope and opportunity for all the intrigues for the formation of a party, of which Soult's army would be the *noyau*, for the support of Napoleon's pretensions.¹

At length, on April 17th, Count Gazan arrived at Lord Wellington's Headquarters to announce Marshal Soult's submission to the new Government, and on April 18th an agreement for the suspension of hostilities was formally entered into between the French and English Commanders.

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. XI, p. 646.*

Toulouse now gave itself up to feasting and rejoicing, and on April 27th the Duc d'Angoulême, as representative of the French Royal Family, made a triumphal entry into the city, Lord Wellington riding out to meet him.

The coming of the Duc d'Angoulême meant the dethronement of the British Commander-in-Chief. "It is curious now", observes Larpent, "to see Lord Wellington play the second fiddle, having been so long established leader . . . He carries it off very well."¹

Doubtless he was glad to be off the top perch and able to creep back into that simplicity which his soul loved, a simplicity which was quite incomprehensible to the continental armies. Searching one day at Lord Wellington's quarters for an officer to lead him into the presence of the English Commander, the French General Clausel and his aide-de-camp were greatly astonished on trying a door to find it opened by Lord Wellington in person, the French Commanders being by no means so easy of access.

Soult and Suchet [observed the officer attending Clausel] would have had about six aides-de-camp etc. in the first room, and a General officer in waiting in the second. "I own," says Larpent, "I think our great man is in the opposite extreme, but he does not like being watched and plagued."²

With the return of Peace, thoughts of home began to stir in Lord Wellington's army, and visions of England and all that England meant, which for so long had seemed a nebulous dream, began at last to take solid form.

There were some, however, to whom it was to remain for ever a dream, for the War God, callous and unrelenting in his demands, had not quite finished with them.

At that time England was at war with America * and part

¹ *Larpent, Vol. III, p. 178.*

² *Ibid., p. 173.*

* In 1812 the United States declared war on Great Britain as a protest against her vigorous policing of the seas; measures which were adopted in self-defence in reply to the French campaign against British Sea Power.

of the Peninsular army on its disbandment was destined immediately for service in that country. Amongst these was Harry Smith, recommended for the contingent by his friend Colonel Colborne of the 52nd.

You have been so unlucky [said Colborne] after all your gallant and important service, in not getting your Majority, * you must not be idle . . . “ Thank you, sir,” replied the somewhat disconsolate Harry, “ I will be ready. This is a kind act of yours ” ; but [he continues] as I knew I must leave behind my young, fond and devoted wife, my heart was ready to burst, and all my visions for our mutual happiness were banished in search of the bubble reputation. I shall never forget her frenzied grief when, with a sort of despair, I imparted the inevitable separation that we were doomed to suffer, after all our escapes, fatigue and privation. . . . She bore it, as she did everything, when the energies of her powerful mind were called forth, exclaiming, “ It is for your advantage, and neither of us must repine.”¹

Nevertheless the parting was terrible.

God only knows [records the devoted husband] the number of staggering and appalling dangers I had faced ; but thank the Almighty I never was unmanned until now, and I leaped on my horse by that impulse which guides the soldier to do his duty.²

There was someone else to whom the conclusion of European peace did not spell rest and relaxation after years of toil, and that was Lord Wellington himself, who but changed one service for another, and accepted without hesitation the difficult and delicate post of British Ambassador in Paris, at the urgent request of the Government he served, who felt that the situation at such a period could only be held by

¹ *Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, pp. 182, 183, 184.* ² *Ibid., p. 188.*

* Colonel Colborne had recommended Harry Smith for his Majority after crossing the Bidassoa, but it was afterwards found that in so doing Smith would be jumping over the heads of about twenty in his own regiment. “ A pity by G——,” was Wellington’s comment on learning of this fact, “ Colborne and the Brigade are so anxious about it, and he [Harry Smith] deserves anything ” (*Autobiography of Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, p. 132.*)

"a character of preponderating influence in the public estimation . . ." ¹

The proposal was made by Lord Castlereagh and conveyed through his brother Sir Charles Stewart, who presented it at Lord Wellington's Headquarters at Toulouse on April 21st.

Your brother Charles has just given me your letter of the 13th [wrote Lord Wellington in reply], and I am very much obliged and flattered by your thinking of me for a situation for which I should never have thought myself qualified. I hope, however, that the Prince Regent, his Government, and your Lordship, are convinced that I am ready to serve him in any situation in which it may be thought that I can be of any service. Although I have been so long absent from England, I should have remained as much longer if it had been necessary ; and I feel no objection to another absence in the public service if it be necessary or desirable.²

Was he a little disappointed, one wonders, at the loss of a much-needed rest ? Had his mind stretched out towards the pleasures of relaxation—to days which would be his own to spend as he would, without the Taskmaster Time laying forever a whip across his back ? Or did his thoughts take a more domestic turn and hover around that family from which for six strenuous years he had been separated ? His children that he had left as babies were small boys now and had just been sent to school at East Sheen.

And then there was Kitty. Did he feel a pull at all in that direction ? Had absence renewed the possibilities of a long shattered dream and rubbed out a little the edges of disillusionment ? It is likely that his feelings were mixed ; that he hardly knew what they were himself. Certainly there was not the strong urge of the happy warrior returning to his rightful mate. His friend Harry Smith was happier than he. Perhaps even the pain which tore the heart of the young husband as he parted from his wife was something to be envied. It meant at all events living at the heart of life.

But whatever his personal thoughts, he had little time to

¹ *Alison, Vol. II, p. 477.*

² *Dispatches, Vol. XI, p. 668.*

indulge them ; life for him was still full and exacting and demanded as usual the ‘ pound of flesh ’ in service.

Leaving Toulouse at the end of April, and accompanied by Lord Fitzroy Somerset and General Alava, he set out for Paris, which he reached on May 4th. “ He looks perfectly well ”, writes Lord Castlereagh, “ and does not show the effects of his campaigns as much as I expected in his countenance.”¹

He arrived just in time to join in the procession of the victorious Allied armies, which marched past before the French King and the Allied Sovereigns ; riding on a white horse, between Castlereagh and Sir Charles Stewart, “ the curiosity of curiosities ”,² in his blue frock coat and round hat amongst the gorgeous uniforms of the Allied Generals. His presence caused intense excitement both amongst the Royal Personages watching from their window, and those who viewed the procession from the streets. “ I felt for my own part ”, states an Englishman present, “ an insatiable desire to see him, and ran many chances of being kicked and trampled down to get near our great man.” Whilst another Englishman pushing feverishly past the former exclaimed desperately, “ Oh, for God’s sake let me see him, I know you will excuse me, Sir, for this, but I must see him.”³

That night there was a happy family reunion, for the Wellesley Poles were in Paris, and Arthur sat down to dinner with his brother William and his wife, their two daughters, Priscilla with her husband, Lord Burghersh, and Emily Wellesley Pole.

Afterwards they went to a ball given by Sir Charles Stewart, where Lord Wellington was the hero of the evening. “ I can see him now entering the room with his two nieces . . . hanging on his arm,” says the Comtesse de Boigne. “ There were no eyes for anyone else.”⁴

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IX, p. 64.*

² *Broughton, Vol. I, p. 222.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Memoirs of Comtesse de Boigne, Vol. I, p. 301.*

Lord Wellington remained but six days in Paris, for Spain was needing him again. Matters were not going well at Madrid ; the returned monarch Ferdinand VII refused to accept the new Spanish constitution, and was at loggerheads with the Government. So he who had brought peace to Spain, was forced to return there to maintain it.

He went, however, first to Toulouse to see to the winding up of his army, arriving in the middle of the night of May 13th, a little spent and weary and recovering from a cold. Here he found an avalanche of business awaiting him for, “ every department was at work ”, says Larpent, “ in a sort of confusion and hurry, that has never happened before ”.¹

Nevertheless he was very gay and in excellent spirits, and even managed to give a ball and supper before his departure.

On May 17th he was off again, accompanied by General Alava and Lord Fitzroy Somerset.

His immediate programme was a strenuous one. He was to stay a few days at Madrid, and then repair to Bordeaux to speed the departure of his army, from thence he would visit Paris and hoped to reach England by June 10th ; a fairly exacting itinerary considering the length of time in those days required for travelling by road. “ This is a great deal too much ”, says Larpent, “ and I think almost impossible. These exertions make him look thin and rather worn . . . ”.²

Besides being a Spanish Grandee, Lord Wellington was now an English Duke, a fact which he communicated to his brother Henry in the postscript of a letter written on his journey to Madrid. “ I believe I forgot to tell you I was made a Duke.”³

This time even the Opposition approved, and Samuel Whitbread, who had once belittled Arthur Wellesley’s victories, now led the amendment on behalf of the Opposition, to endow the Dukedom with half a million as against the £300,000 voted by the Government.

¹ *Larpent, Vol. III, p. 207.*

² *Ibid., p. 208.*

³ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IX, p. 100.*

The Duke was anxious to reach Spain with all possible speed, for matters there were fast moving to an undesirable crisis. The country was divided into two factions, one for the King and one for the Constitution ; even the army was split up and taking sides. "I think, however," he wrote Lord Castlereagh before leaving Toulouse, "I can keep them both quiet."¹

"I have accomplished my object in coming here", he reports after his arrival, "that is I think there will certainly be no civil war at present . . ."²

The Duke was very well received by the King of Spain, who expressed a great friendship and admiration for him, declaring that the only acts of the Cortes of which he approved were making him Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish armies, and giving him the estate of Soto de Roma.

The welcome given to the English General at the Spanish Court made a great impression on the Grandees. "Were you not delighted?" the Duque de San Carlos asked him afterwards. "Did you observe that as you came in, the Guards stamped with their feet ; and are you aware that they only do so to people of the very highest rank ? You must be quite happy."³

Fortunately for himself the happiness of the English Duke was not dependent on his reception at any Court, and his satisfaction at this particular one would have been greatly increased if those who composed it were in a better temper to produce peace and well-being in the country at large. But though at first things promised well, he was not so sanguine before the end of his visit.

I have been very well received by the King and his Ministers [he wrote], but I fear that I have done but little good. The Duque de San Carlos, in a conversation I had with him, promised me, first, that the decree for calling the Cortes should appear forthwith ; secondly, that all the prisoners should be released on St. Ferdinand's day, the 30th

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. XII, pp. 27, 28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³ *Stanhope*, p. 80.

May, excepting such as it was determined to bring to trial, who should be fairly tried, without loss of time . . . Nothing has yet been done on any of these points. I told him that he must expect that the King's measures would be attacked and abused in all parts of the world, but particularly in England ; and that until some steps were taken to prove that the King was inclined to govern the country on liberal principles . . . he could not expect much countenance in England.¹

Having done all that he could at Madrid, the Duke set out for Bordeaux, where his army was assembled previous to embarkation, arriving there on the night of June 10th.

The time had now come to say good-bye to that army which he had so successfully commanded and which for six eventful years had been the central pivot of his existence, the beloved mistress of his manhood's prime. No human being had ever been to him all that this collective mass of human beings had been.

It was an army peculiarly his own, the instrument which responded to the workings of his mind ; the outer expression of himself. It had become part of him as he was part of it —its motive force and inspiration. He had taken it in hand, a heterogeneous collection made up of the basest and the best, and by untiring patience had fashioned it into what he eventually called it—the finest army in the world.

Few have realized his deep love for the wonderful human machine which grew to perfection under his guiding hand. He might scold it, punish it, and bludgeon it into the pattern of that ideal which he had created for it, but woe to any outsider who dared to lay a finger upon it.

It was his pride, a pride in which he was justified—this army of his,—for he had brought it from Portugal for the most part a thieving, plundering, ill-behaved rabble, and carried it over the borders of France the model army of the civilized world.

He cannot have parted with it without a pang, for it was tearing something vital out of his life.

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. XII, p. 38.*

And yet, as ever, inarticulate where he felt the deepest, and with that aversion to anything savouring of the theatrical, his General Order of farewell to his army was expressed in a few simple phrases of soldierly approbation.

GENERAL ORDER.

BORDEAUX. *June 14th, 1814.*

1. The Commander of the Forces, being upon the point of returning to England, again takes this opportunity of congratulating the army upon the recent events which have restored peace to their country and to the world.

2. The share which the British army has had in producing these events, and the high character with which the army will quit this country, must be equally satisfactory to every individual belonging to it, as they are to the Commander of the Forces; and he trusts that the troops will continue the same good conduct to the last.

3. The Commander of the Forces once more requests the army to accept his thanks.

4. Although circumstances may alter the relations in which he has stood towards them, so much to his satisfaction, he assures them that he shall never cease to feel the warmest interest in their welfare and honor; and that he will be at all times happy to be of any service to those to whose conduct, discipline, and gallantry, their country is so much indebted.¹

Having taken leave of his army, the Duke left Bordeaux and commenced his homeward journey, stopping a few days in Paris en route.

In what a different position he was returning to that in which he had set out six years before. He was then a General on trial, just emerging from the cloud of a public enquiry, trusted only by those who had served under him, and those Ministers who had chosen him, but by no means possessing the confidence of the country at large.

He was now returning a triumphant warrior, trusted and revered not only by his own country but by the whole of Europe.

He went out a Knight and a Lieutenant-General; he returned a Duke and a Field-Marshal. In six years he had

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. XII, p. 62.*

climbed every step in the Peerage and attained to the highest rung of military rank. He was smothered in decorations from many nations, and was a duke of Spain and Portugal as well as England. There was practically nothing material left for him to gain.

Yet he himself was quite unchanged, and a friend who met him after his return at a fête at Carlton House given in his honour, describes him as, "just the same good-humoured, unaffected creature he ever was".¹

He arrived at Dover on June 23rd about five o'clock a.m. in the sloop-of-war *Rosario* amidst a scene of the wildest enthusiasm. Flags flew from every masthead, guns thundered out their salvos, whilst cheer after cheer rang out from the waiting crowd. In spite of the earliness of the hour 10,000 people were already assembled, their numbers momentarily increasing.

As soon as his feet touched the shore he was seized upon by his admiring countrymen and carried shoulder high to his destination.

From Dover he took carriage to London, his route thither a scene of continuous rejoicing.

On arrival at Westminster Bridge public excitement reached its height; his carriage was stopped, the horses taken out, and men fought and struggled for the honour of drawing him home. Up Parliament Street they pulled him, along Whitehall, through the Haymarket and Piccadilly, until they reached his house in Hamilton Place, where the two proudest little boys in England with their mother, awaited the coming of this splendid father.

And even here the crowd would hardly leave him, but carried him from the carriage across the threshold of his home until at last by dint of good-humoured entreaties they were reluctantly persuaded to set him down and surrender him to his family.

But the crowd waited for some time outside, cheering, and

¹ *Irish Beauty of the Regency*, p. 233.

Lady Shelley and some friends riding through the Park heard it and learning the cause galloped up to try and get a glimpse of the hero. The Duke, however, was no longer in the house, having "made his escape through the Park . . . to call on his mother in Upper Brook Street".¹

There was, too, another happy re-union, for John Malcolm was then in England, and it is stated that the Duke "had not been many hours in London before he made his way to Manchester-street to shake his dear friend . . . by the hand, and excited the suspicions of an incredulous old servant by announcing himself as the Duke of Wellington".²

The joys of friendly re-unions, however, were quickly broken into by the call of duty and on the following day the Duke was off to Portsmouth to pay his respects to the Prince Regent, who in company with the Allied Sovereigns, then on a visit to England, was attending a Naval Review. The arrival of England's hero took the wind out of the sails of the Foreign Royalties, and from the Prince Regent downwards no one had eyes or ears for anyone but the Duke.

The following day he was back again in London which was waiting impatiently to do him honour. He had now to submit to a course of lionizing and hero-worship, a test of modesty which he passed with flying colours.

Neither unconscious of his own merits [says Gleig] nor ostentatiously pretending to undervalue them, he yet shrank from the most remote appearance of demanding what all whom he approached were anxious to give, and constantly endeavoured to divert towards others the tokens of public respect and admiration which were intended for himself. . . . He became, as was to be expected, wherever he appeared, the object of universal attention ; yet he either did not observe, or acted as if he had not observed, the circumstance ; returning with perfect simplicity the salutes that were offered to him, or entering into easy conversation with those who immediately surrounded him.³

The first public ceremony of importance after his return

¹ *Lady Shelley*, Vol. I, p. 66.

² *Kaye*, p. 272.

³ *Brialmont and Gleig*, Vol. II, p. 356.

took place on June 28th, when shortly after three o'clock in the afternoon he took his place for the first time in the House of Lords, being introduced by the Dukes of Richmond and Beaufort and wearing under his ducal robes the uniform of a Field-Marshal, with the Star of the Garter.

After the usual ceremonies had been enacted, the Lord Chancellor made a formal speech of welcome, in the course of which he referred

to a fact in your Grace's life, singular I believe, in the history of the country, and infinitely honorable to your Grace, that you have manifested upon your first entrance into this House, your right under various grants to all the dignities in the Peerage of this realm which the crown can confer. These dignities have been conferred at various periods, but in the short compass of little more than four years, for great public services occurring in rapid succession. . . .¹

On July 1st the Duke of Wellington attended to receive the public thanks of the House of Commons, when in expressing his gratitude for the honour done to him he laid the credit of his military successes to

the confidence reposed in me by His Majesty's Ministers, and by the Commander-in-Chief, by the gracious favour of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, and by the reliance which I had on the support of my gallant friends, the General Officers of the army, and on the bravery of the officers and troops. . . .²

The Speaker, in reply, after praising the Duke's martial exploits, paid him the still higher tribute of praising his character.

It is not, however [said he], the grandeur of military success which has alone fixed our admiration, or commanded our applause; it has been that generous and lofty spirit which inspired your troops with unbounded confidence, and taught them to know that the day of battle was always a day of victory; that moral courage and enduring fortitude, which in perilous times, when gloom and doubt had beset ordinary minds, stood, nevertheless unshaken; and that ascendancy of character,

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. XII, pp. 63, 64.

² *Ibid.*, p. 68.

which uniting the energies of jealous and rival nations, enabled you to wield at will the fate and fortunes of mighty empires.

For the repeated thanks and grants bestowed upon you by this House, in gratitude for your many and eminent services, you have thought fit this day to offer us your acknowledgments ; but this nation well knows that it is still largely your debtor. It owes to you the proud satisfaction, that, amidst the constellation of great and illustrious warriors who have recently visited our country, we could present to them a leader of our own, to whom all, by common acclamation, conceded the pre-eminence ; and when the will of heaven and the common destinies of our nature, shall have swept away the present generation, you will have left your great name and example as an unperishable monument, exciting others to like deeds of glory, and serving at once to adorn, defend, and perpetuate the existence of this country amongst the ruling nations of the earth.¹

But perhaps the greatest of his public triumphs was the banquet given to him at the Guildhall by his old enemy the Common Council of London, who had in years gone by treated him so shabbily.

Now, however, nothing was too good for the hero since his efforts were crowned with success. A superb sword was presented to him at the banquet on behalf of the citizens of London ; his dispatches were compared to the Commentaries of Cæsar and he was called a chosen instrument in the hands of Providence during war. “ May you long enjoy in peace the love of your country and the admiration of mankind,”² declared the enthusiastic speech-maker.

And yet he had been just as worthy of honour when struggling with his back against the wall and a large part of his countrymen pulling against him.

Perhaps a smaller-minded man would have reflected upon these things and refused to attend the celebrations at the Guildhall in his honour. Certainly they must have increased in Arthur Wellesley that contempt for public praise or blame which characterized his whole career.

But they left no bitterness in his heart and he accepted in simple gratitude the praise of his countrymen as he had

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. XII, pp. 68, 69. ² *Stocqueler*, Vol. I, p. 354.

patiently accepted their blame, glad only to be at peace with all men.

The social world now entered upon an orgy of entertaining for him, and his brother William gave a large party at Wanstead which was attended by "the Prince Regent, the Dukes of York and Cambridge and ninety people—including the whole Wellesley family and all the foreigners who were still in London. . . ." ¹

The hero of the hour took it all in a most impersonal fashion "and seemed", says Lady Shelley, "to regard all the pageantry, and the honours of that day as nonsense and fun. It seemed as though all these honours concerned any one rather than himself." ²

In the course of the banquet the Prince Regent made a speech and proposed the health of the Duke of Wellington who, when he rose to reply, had "a broad smile on his face". "'I want words to express', " he was beginning, when the Prince interrupted him: "'My dear fellow, we know your *actions* and we will excuse your *words*, so sit down.' This the Duke did, with all the delight of a schoolboy who has been given an unexpected holiday." ³

On July 1st a masquerade was given in his honour at Burlington House. On July 18th Lady Shelley secured him for a party, and again for dinner on the 21st when her small son John, "blushing up to the eyes, went up to him and said; 'I am so glad to see you, Duke of Wellington. I have wanted to for such a long time.' " ⁴ After dinner they went on to the fête at Carlton House, where the Duke's chief delight was to watch his aides-de-camp dancing. "How would society get on without all my boys?" ⁵ said he to Lady Shelley with affectionate pride.

His simple unaffected behaviour on all occasions continued to impress Lady Shelley, although at first she had been a little awed by him.

¹ *Lady Shelley, Vol. I, p. 68.* ² *Ibid., pp. 68, 69.* ³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid., Vol. I, p. 70.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

The Duke's manner [she observes] is formal, and, at a first introduction, very imposing. He seldom speaks until he is well acquainted. . . . After an absence of six years, during which time the Duke had gained victories, and received honours enough to turn the brain of an ordinary great man, he retains that simplicity of character, and manner, which is still his distinguishing excellence. He remembers his old friends with the same interest as ever; and the youngest of his subordinate officers enjoys his society, and is indeed much more an object of his attention, than are those of a more exalted station in life.¹

But his time was not wholly spent in being lionized, for there was still much business to be done in the winding up of his army's affairs, and in this connection McGrigor, his late Chief Surgeon, visited him daily.

One morning the Duke turned to him and said, "Mac, we are now winding up all arrears with the government; I have asked them how you are to be disposed of, and I am told you are to be placed on half-pay, but I consider your peculiar circumstances will entitle you to a specific retirement."²

To this end the Duke himself was quietly working, and on July 26th a letter had gone to the Military Secretary requesting him to bring McGrigor's claims favourably before the Commander-in-Chief.*

I have every reason [he wrote] to be satisfied with the manner in which Mr. McGrigor conducted the department under his directions, and I consider him one of the most industrious, able and successful public servants I have ever met with.³

The result was as the Duke desired and the next time he saw McGrigor it was to tell him that he was to retire on £3 a day, and that the honour of Knighthood was to be conferred upon him.

But that which was one of the most gratifying features to McGrigor was the fact that he was to be taken to receive his Knighthood by the Duke himself.

¹ *Lady Shelley*, Vol. I, p. 67.

² *McGrigor*, p. 357.

³ *Dispatches*, Vol. XII, p. 79.

* The Duke of York.

Unfortunately, however, this arrangement had to be cancelled as the Duke was called out of Town on business.

Nevertheless, on his way down he found time to call in at Carlton House to see how his friend was faring, and McGigor standing disconsolately alone in the ante-room, too shy to intrude upon Lord Bathurst (who had been detailed to take the Duke of Wellington's place), was heartened up by the entrance of a familiar figure in travelling-dress who hustled up to Lord Bathurst and enquired for "my friend McGigor whom you are to present". Then turning round and catching sight of him the Duke seized hold of him, "Here he is," said he; "take care of him."¹ Then hurrying away, he got into his carriage and continued his journey.

There was in this act of the Duke [observes McGigor] a benevolence of character of which I have observed many other instances, and which only those who had been much near to him could know. The Duke knew that I had much natural shyness. He knew the disappointment I would feel in not having his support at the presentation . . . subsequently he said, "I thought it as well to place you under Lord Bathurst, you are a shy fellow and might not have found him out."²

The time was now drawing on for the Duke to leave England to take up his post as Ambassador in Paris. He must have left a little regretfully after such a happy time spent in the sunshine of his countrymen's affection, and the knitting up of family ties.

I am convinced [says Lady Shelley] that the more he is known, the more will he be loved; and that he forms an exception to the old maxim, that "no man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*". The adoration felt for the Duke by his family, his children and above all by the Duchess are proofs of his goodness of heart and disposition.³

The day before his departure he had the happiness of attending the marriage of his niece, Emily Wellesley Pole, to his devoted A.D.C. and 'Shadow', Lord Fitzroy Somerset, and giving away the bride.

¹ *McGrigor*, p. 358. ² *Ibid.* ³ *Lady Shelley*, Vol. I, p. 72.

On August 7th the Duke set out for the Netherlands which he was to visit before commencing his duties in Paris. He took with him as one of his unpaid attachés, Lord William Lennox, a younger son of the Duke of Richmond, then a lad in his teens, who has left some personal impressions of Wellington's life at this particular time.

Upon the 6th of August [says he] . . . I received orders to be with the Duke the following day, at two o'clock in the afternoon. Need I say, that punctually at that hour I drove up to the door of his Grace's temporary residence, in Hamilton Place, Piccadilly. I was ushered into his presence, and there saw the great conqueror seated at his writing table, placing some manuscripts in a large despatch box.

As the clock was about to strike three . . . the Duke rose from his chair, and, having previously taken leave of those relations and friends there assembled, walked to the door of his carriage.¹

The journey was broken at Coombe Wood at Lord Liverpool's residence, where the Duke and his suite dined and slept.

Nothing [says his young attaché] could exceed the good-humour and affability of the great man, who told anecdotes of the late war, laughed, jested, and kept the whole company in a state of delight. At an early hour next morning we left for Dover. The Duke was received everywhere on the road with the highest enthusiasm; the gathering multitude pressing, clinging, struggling around the carriage at every change of horses.²

At three o'clock, a salute from the batteries announced the Duke's arrival at Dover, but the weather being too rough to embark there, he went on to Deal, and at 6.20 p.m. boarded H.M.S. *Griffon*, which was to take him across the Channel. At six o'clock the following evening he landed at Bergen-op-Zoom.

On the following day he visited Antwerp and on August 11th set out for Brussels, where he was enthusiastically welcomed by his late Aide-de-camp, the young Prince of Orange, now occupying his official position as Hereditary Prince of the Netherlands.

¹ *Wellington in Private Life*, pp. 2, 3, 4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

The Duke remained a few days in Brussels, during which time the City gave itself up to festivities.

On August 17th, accompanied by the young Prince of Orange, he set out on a tour of inspection of the Belgian frontier, visiting Namur, Charleroi, Mons, Tournai, Courtrai, Menin, Ypres, Furnes, and Nieuport, and giving his advice concerning the strengthening of this important line of fortifications. It is interesting to note that in his memorandum on the subject he cited as a likely battleground, “the entrance of the *forêt* de Soignies by the high road which leads to Brussels from Binch, Charleroi, and Namur”¹—the very spot which a year later was to be the scene of the Battle of Waterloo.

On August the 22nd the Duke reached Paris and took up his residence in the Borghese Palace, Rue de Faubourg, St. Honore (which had been purchased by the British Government for the use of its ambassadors), and on the day following his arrival he went in state to present his credentials as British Ambassador to the King of France.

It was a difficult task to which the Duke now set his hand, one in which however earnestly he might strive to do his duty he was almost bound to give dissatisfaction; “. . . It was very foolish”, said Napoleon from Elba, commenting on Wellington’s appointment as Ambassador, “to send him to the Court of France to face those whom he had humbled.”²

Yet foolish though it may have been in one sense, in another it was also wise, for it was the choice of a man who was a citizen of the world as well as of Great Britain; whose wide experience of life outside his own country had given him an understanding of other people’s point of view; a man, too, who had a personal affection for France and wished to see her settle down to peace and prosperity under her hereditary monarchy.

It is interesting to note that the first public matter touched upon by the Duke and, indeed, that which occupied the central position in his Ambassadorship, was the question of

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. XII, p. 129.

² *Boughton*, Vol. I, p. 183.

the Slave Trade which Great Britain was desirous of persuading France to put an end to in her colonies. It was, however, a proposition which met with little or no sympathy in France, for the public mind had not been educated to an abhorrence of this iniquity, as it had in England under the unceasing activities of William Wilberforce * and Clarkson.†

I do not think [wrote the Duke to Mr. Wilberforce on September 15th] that there is the slightest prospect at present of prevailing upon the French Government to abolish the trade entirely within the period of five years. The King told me that he could no more attempt to force the inclinations of his people upon this subject than the King of England could the inclinations of his.¹

Wellington's efforts in the cause of abolition were forceful and tireless, and since leaving England he had found time in twenty busy days to make an exhaustive study of the question.

I was much pleased to find [wrote that ardent abolitionist, Mr. Clarkson, from Paris on August 27th] that his Grace had made himself master of the subject of the slave trade since he left England. He had read during his journey and since his arrival here my History of the Abolition throughout, also the Abridgement of the Evidence, also my 'Impolicy of the Slave Trade', as well as Mr. Wilberforce's Letter to his Constituents, and every paper and memorandum furnished both by Mr. Macaulay ‡ and myself; so that he wants little or no aid from me, as far as a knowledge of the subject is concerned.²

It was a hard battle that lay before the ex-British Commander-in-Chief; one of the hardest to which he had ever set his hand, for he was fighting vested interests, and was likely in the end to be out-generalled by that most unscrupulous of all fighters, 'greed of gain'.

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. XII, p. 115.

² *Supp. Dispatches*, Vol. IX, p. 228.

* Wilberforce, William, 1759-1833. The great philanthropist and anti-slavery crusader.

† Clarkson, Thomas, 1760-1846. His life was spent in fighting the slave trade.

‡ Macaulay, Zachary, d. 1838. A zealous worker for the abolition of slavery. Father of Thomas Macaulay, the famous writer and historian.

Nevertheless he kept doggedly upon his course, and at length by the beginning of November the French Government decided to take a step in the desired direction ; “ . . . Orders have at last been issued ” the Duke was writing to Mr. Wilberforce on November 4th, “ to prevent the trade in slaves by French subjects on the coasts of Africa north of Cape Formoso.¹

It cannot be necessary for me to state to your Grace [wrote Wilberforce in reply] with how much joy I received the intelligence of the actual issuing of the French prohibitory order . . . permit me to congratulate your Grace on this bloodless victory, which, if less dangerous in the achieving of it, will have, I trust, the same effect as your other victories, and to at least as great an extent, that of rescuing mankind from oppression and violence . . .²

But alas, these rosy promises soon lost their brightness and more than a month later the Duke is lamenting to Mr. Wilberforce that, “ All that has hitherto passed on the subject of restricting the slave trade on the north-west coast of Africa, consists in the letters written to the *Préfets Maritimes* . . . ”³

There was one counsel which the Duke never ceased to impress upon abolitionists in England, and that was to avoid discussion of the subject in the English newspapers.

I must say [he wrote to Mr. Wilberforce] that the daily press in England do us a good deal of harm in this as well as in other questions. We are sure of the King * and his Government, if he could only rely upon the opinion of his people. But, as long as our press teems with writings drawn with a view to irritate persons here, we shall never be able to exercise the influence which we ought to have upon this question, and which we really possess.⁴

Besides business of state there is also the lighter side to an Ambassador’s life, a side which Arthur Duke of Wellington was the last person to neglect. And so we find him giving great entertainments, attending social functions of all kinds,

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. XII, p. 270.

² *Supp. Dispatches*, Vol. IX, p. 435.

³ *Dispatches*, Vol. XII, pp. 212, 213.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

* Louis XVIII.

and seeming, indeed, to draw a great deal of fun and amusement out of the process.

It was all a great change after so many years of hard campaigning, and though his time of Ambassadorship was of necessity an anxious one, it seems also to have been a happy one.

Early in October, Kitty in her rôle of Duchess and Ambassador came out to join him. But it was to be doubted if she took to the situation as kindly as her husband did, though she made valiant efforts to do her duty and to please.

The Duchess of Wellington has arrived to take her station here [writes Lady Elizabeth York on October 28th]. Her appearance unfortunately, does not correspond with one's notion of an ambassadress, or the wife of a hero, but she succeeds uncommonly well in her part, and takes all proper pains to make herself and her parties agreeable.¹

A most commendable effort on Kitty's part, who liked a quiet domestic life and was badly equipped for a public position, being neither smart nor brilliant, and possessing none of the qualities which attract the crowd. Her task, too, was rendered more difficult by the hosts of gaudy butterflies who circled in clouds round the great Arthur, flaunting their gay colours before his appreciative eye, and making the quieter tints of the little moth appear more sombre by the contrast. It would have been so different had he really loved the moth. But try as he would to do his duty along these lines he could not command his affections, and being heart whole was pleasantly susceptible after years of male society to whatever charmer flitted across his path.

Not that he took any of them too seriously, even the famous beauty Madame Récamier, to whom he paid the usual homage expected from his sex, only received "unmeaning notes which all resemble one another".²

Grassini, the famous singer, seems to have sunk a bit

¹ *Story of Two Noble Lives*, Vol. I, p. 28.

² *Madame Récamier*, p. 136.

deeper into the British Ambassador's susceptibilities, and his public attentions to her set the gossips' tongues awagging. But then, to the spell of her voice and great talents, "she added extreme beauty, and a sound common sense",¹ a combination of qualities which proved irresistible.

Besides social amenities the Duke also found time to indulge in sport, and had many a run with the Royal stag-hounds. On one occasion at Fontainbleau the French King attended in person, in a magnificent gold carriage, somewhat incongruously drawn by eight short-tailed brown English horses.

The hunt, however, developed into a typically English affair, for the deer broke covert and took to the open country, a lamentable lapse of etiquette, seeing the King was watching from the wood. "'Hold hard!' shouted the Duc de Berri,* 'Arreterz, messieurs!' cried the piquer. 'Turn him back to de vood', ejaculated another'.² But it was of no use for deer, hounds and Englishmen were now well in their stride, and, records young William Lennox, "we succeeded in keeping the pack in full cry over a fair hunting country, taking regular French leave of the royal sportsmen". One of the huntsmen followed for a while, but was stopped at the end of the first field by a small dyke. "Au revoir, messieurs," said he, raising his hat politely as he parted company with the field, "I do not jump the large ditches."³

A sporting attaché of the Duke of Wellington now assumed control of affairs, and the run continued until the stag took to a lake when hounds were whipped off and a party of guilty Englishmen, the British Ambassador amongst them, awaited

¹ *Comtesse de Boigne, Vol. I*, p. 138.

² *Wellington in Private Life*, p. 50.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

* Duc de Berri, Charles Ferdinand, 1778–1820, younger son of the Comte d'Artois (afterwards Charles X of France). Served with the army of Condé 1792–7. In 1801 went to live in England, where he remained until the Bourbon restoration in 1814. Was placed in command of the Royalist troops in Paris after the escape of Napoleon from Elba in 1815.

in fear and trembling the wrath of the Duc de Berri, who came galloping towards them. A smile, however, illuminated the royal countenance and, "Well, Duke, this is an English run",¹ was the only 'rebuke' which fell to the apprehensive sportsmen.

In connection with hunting days Lord William Lennox tells a story which illustrates his Chief's kindly disposition.

Upon one occasion, the Duke being prevented from hunting, lent his favourite mount Elmore to his young attaché, who had the misfortune to lame him on the ride home.

"Well, *you* have gone and done it," [said the Duke's coachman Turnham, who was a great character and no respecter of persons] "Why, the Duke would not have taken two hundred for that horse . . ."

Happily for me [says the young A.D.C.], the Duke, who had been occupied all day, was out riding, and I did not see him until dinner time. I had fully made up my mind to mention the accident, but wished to wait until nine o'clock, when I was to have a "bulletin" of Elmore's state.

As a large party was assembled, little was said about the hunting until the ladies had retired; when I was called upon to give a full, true, and particular account of it. I mentioned the brilliant manner in which the horse had gone, and the panegyrics he had received from all. "A splendid animal," said my chief. "I hope to ride him next Monday at Fontainbleau." My heart quailed within me.

At this moment, the butler, who had heard of the mishap, gave me a message from the groom, that the horse was a little better from some treatment that had been adopted. . . .

"I can take you to the play," said his Grace; "the cabriolet is at the door."

We drove there. I was, as usual, the charioteer upon such occasions, and so distracted was I upon the present, that I nearly grazed the curb-stone at starting, and was within an inch of knocking over one of the *gens-d'armes* as we approached the theatre.

It was late when we arrived: the last act of "Oreste" was going on, with Talma * as the hero. . . . In vain had the perfect acting of Talma any charm for me, and when the afterpiece began, I was too wretched to laugh. . . .

¹ *Wellington in Private Life*, p. 52.

* Talma, François Joseph, French actor, 1763-1826.

"I am afraid you are quite knocked up," said the Duke, as, seated by his side, I drove him off from the theatre.

My only answer was a deep sigh; then making a sudden resolution, I screwed my courage to the sticking-place, and told the whole of the day's adventure, and the accident that had befallen me.

"Can't be helped," said the Duke in his usual quick voice. "Hope it is not as bad as you think—accidents will happen."

The tone and manner in which the above phrases were delivered, and the inward satisfaction of feeling one's conscience unburdened, completely restored me to comfort, which was not a little increased by the kind manner in which my patron wished me goodnight.¹

But alas, when early the following morning the young attaché visited the stables he found his worst fears realized and the horse dead lame.

From seven till ten o'clock [says he] I wandered about the house like a perturbed spirit, when at the latter hour I received a message to attend his Grace in his morning-room. I entered the Duke's presence like a condemned criminal.

"Turnham tells me 'Elmore' must be blistered and turned out!"

I quaked in my shoes. . . . I thought to myself that my hunting days were over.

"I've heard all particulars; you're not to blame—you did your best." . . .

"But," continued the chief, "I can't afford to run the chance of losing all my best horses; so in future"—the climax was coming, thought I; no more hunting—"so in future, you shall have the brown horse and the chestnut mare; and, if you knock them up, you must afterwards mount yourself."

I was so overcome with this noble and liberal conduct, that I could scarcely stammer out my thanks.

"There; take this to the office, and give it to Hervey. We shall hunt, dine, and sleep to-morrow at Fontainbleau."

I left the hero of a hundred battles with but one sentiment, that of overpowering gratitude, and felt that Wellington was as good in all the kindly offices of social intercourse, as he was great in the more extended duties of the field. Not only upon this, but upon a variety of other occasions, I always found the Duke of a most considerate and forgiving temper. . . .²

¹ *Wellington in Private Life*, pp. 75-79.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81.

There was one thing, however, that he would not condone, and that was neglect of duty, a fact of which this same young aide-de-camp was once made emphatically aware.

It was in the following year, when William Lennox had been sent with despatches to the King of the Netherlands, told to be quick about it and report to Headquarters immediately on his return.

Now it so happened that the Duke was out when the attaché got back, and an attractive invitation for an evening's amusement drove the thoughts of his mission completely from the young man's head; neither was his memory stimulated by a good dinner with plenty of champagne, followed by an amusing farce at the theatre.

At the ball at the Austrian ambassador's, however, his memory suddenly returned as he caught sight of his Chief gazing intently upon him with anger in his eye.

"It then for the first time came across my mind", said he, "that I had reversed the saying of—duty first, and pleasure afterwards; and that I had been guilty of gross neglect, in not having waited to report myself personally, and the result of my mission to his Grace."¹

On the following morning an official letter summoned the culprit to the presence of the Duke, who showed by his manner that he was much displeased, and pointed out with dignity and firmness

that his own staff ought to set an example to the rest of the army in the fulfilment of their duties; and that . . . if once officers, employed by him, were to judge for themselves, as to the importance or unimportance of a mission, their utility would be destroyed, and the most serious consequences might ensue—"Obedience to orders is the first duty of a soldier. I hope I shall have no further occasion to revert to the subject."²

That evening at dinner as luck would have it a young man just out from England turned the conversation on the doings of the previous evening.

¹ *Wellington in Private Life*, p. 83.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 85.

In vain [says the miserable William] did I try to change the subject, not wishing the Duke to know what pursuits had occupied me on my return; but as soon as I made the attempt, the persevering youth again came back to the charge. "And when did you return?" "And did I not catch a glimpse of you at Beauvilliers?" "And were you not at the Variétés?" "And how came you to leave the ball so early?" ". . . I called upon you at four and your servant told me——"

What this disclosure was about [says the young aide-de-camp] I never knew, for the Duke seeing my perplexity, and anxious not to be made acquainted with more of my sayings and doings, abruptly terminated the dialogue by asking me to drink a glass of wine; he then proceeded to question me, as to how the new piece had been received at the theatre. This entirely drove the Hague out of the heads of all the party, and I could not but feel most grateful at the noble conduct of the Duke, who disdaining, upon this as upon all other occasions, to get information in an underhand manner, had most kindly come to my rescue, had shown his forgiveness in pledging me in a bumper of claret, and had terminated a conversation which might have led to most unpleasant consequences. . . .

It was by such acts of kindness, affability, and consideration, that the immortal Wellington won the hearts of all his officers.¹

Amongst the English visitors in Paris at this period was Lady Bessborough, who has left a record of the gay doings of the French capital at that time, as also the thorny path trodden by the King of France towards his people's affections.

The K's reception last night was very brilliant [says she in describing a gala performance at the Opera]. . . . There was great applause both at his coming in and between each act . . . but with all this it did not give one the feel of the sort of popularity they ought to have to make things go smoothly—there was something flagging and cold in it, and they do not take the way to create enthusiasm, but it is very difficult to say what would be exactly right to do.²

But at the play on November 14th Lady Bessborough finds the Royalist fervour strike a truer note, and at a certain juncture "the whole pit rose with one shout: 'Le Roi, le Roi! Notre bon Louis!'"³

The round of pleasure was pursued in Paris with fatiguing

¹ *Wellington in Private Life*, pp. 86, 87, 88.

² *Leveson Gower, Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 505. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 509.

diligence, for the world was *en fête* and there were many interesting people to be met.

We were at the *Français* last night [writes Lady Bessborough on November 18th] and saw Madlle. Mars * act delightfully in "Tartuffe" and "La Mere Supposee" . . . Today we have again been labouring in the way of our calling, sight seeing, and tonight were at Mad. de Récamier's Société early, and the Dss of Wellington's ball late . . .¹

On Sunday, however, the Ambassadorial entertainments struck a more serious note and on November 20th Lady Bessborough attended "a most crowded suffocating church at the D. of Wellington's,"² before commencing her day's campaign.

And so this queer strangely assorted world of Paris, composed of erstwhile enemies and doubtful friends, danced, gossiped and laughed its way through the interlude which preceded the next upheaval.

The atmosphere, however, was decidedly jumpy underneath, and the French nation by no means as settled as its social doings seemed to indicate.

There existed a good deal of uneasiness in the town in the course of the last week. . . . [wrote the Duke to Lord Castlereagh on October 4th]. The Jacobin party, and that attached exclusively to Buonaparte, were observed to be more than usually active; two libels against the King and the government were published and distributed, and reports of English influence, of the dangers to be apprehended from our position in the Low Countries, etc, were circulated in all the coffee houses and public places. . . .

There exists no doubt of the continued discontent of the military, and of those employed by the late government, for whom there is no employment under the present. The number of discontented is augmented by the immense number of persons ruined by the Revolution, who have all been accustomed to look to the restoration of the House of Bourbon as the end of their sufferings, and that the possession of their fortunes and of the honours and emoluments of the State would immediately

¹ *Leveson Gower, Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 509.* ² *Ibid., p. 520.*

* Mars, Mademoiselle Anne Françoise Hippolyte, French actress, 1779-1847.



“THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR.”

follow. All this class of persons have been disappointed, and their wants are increased by the expenses which they have incurred to come to Paris to solicit employment; and they are as loud in their complaint of the want of firmness of the government as the Jacobin party and those attached to Buonaparte are in their censures of its want of other qualities. . . .

This situation of affairs must occasion constant uneasiness, but I entertain no doubt that if the King can carry on his government without any material difference of opinion with the legislature, he will gain time sufficient to establish it effectually.¹

During the process, however, many untoward events and disturbances were likely to occur, and amongst others the possibility of an attack on the British Ambassador loomed menacingly upon the horizon and filled the British nation with grave anxiety.

I am persuaded your Grace will pardon me [wrote one the Duke's countrymen in Paris] if the anxiety which I feel, in common with all your countrymen, upon all occasions in the most remote degree interesting to your Grace, leads me to trespass for a moment upon you unnecessarily. . . .

Since I have been in France, having mixed very much with the people upon several occasions, I have had an opportunity of hearing their sentiments and opinions; and I think it a duty I owe to my country and to your Grace to communicate to you that the discharged officers of this country say their feelings are wounded particularly by seeing your Grace ambassador here. . . . A stranger to fear, your Grace will permit your country to feel some apprehension at seeing your Grace in Paris with a disappointed, disbanded French army entertaining such sentiments towards your Grace.²

On October 31st Major-General Macaulay, just arrived in London from Paris, brought a very alarming account of the state of affairs and wrote warning Lord Liverpool of

the very perilous situation in which Lord Wellington appears to me to be placed at Paris, under the existing circumstances of general discontent and perverted feelings in France. . . .

It is not for me to presume to offer one word to your Lordship upon the universal feeling that would be excited in England by the arrest of

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IX, pp. 315, 316.*

² *Ibid., pp. 299, 300.*

the Duke of Wellington. It is sufficient to observe to your Lordship that should my Lord Wellington remain in Paris, this event, or something more dreadful to him personally . . . appears to me far from improbable or distant.¹

Thoroughly alarmed at the above report, Lord Liverpool lost no time in begging the Duke to leave Paris immediately.

It is at the same time of importance [he wrote him] that this step should be taken in such a manner as would give the least umbrage to the French government, and not betray any alarm on our part as to the prospect of an internal convulsion in France. . . .

Two ideas have occurred to us for carrying our purpose into effect. We are perfectly ready to leave the decision between them entirely to you. We only request that you would act upon one of them without delay, and that you would continue in Paris as short a time as possible after receiving this letter.

The first, is that you should go immediately to Vienna for the purpose of communicating with Lord Castlereagh on the subject of the frontier of the Netherlands. . . .

The other idea which has presented itself to our minds is, that you should be appointed to the chief command in America, and that you should go out with full powers to make peace, or to continue the war, if peace should be found impracticable, with renewed vigour.²

I have received your letters of the 4th [wrote the Duke in reply] . . . I feel no disinclination to undertake the American concern ; but to tell you the truth, I think that, under existing circumstances, you cannot at this moment allow me to quit Europe. You might do so possibly in March next, but now it appears impossible.

You already know my opinion of the danger at Paris. There are so many discontented people, and there is so little to prevent mischief that the event may occur on any night ; and if it should occur, I don't think I should be allowed to depart . . .

But I confess I don't like to depart from Paris, and I wish the government would leave the time and the mode at my own discretion. To go to Vienna at all is a bad pretence ; there is no good reason for going . . . to go at all at the present moment is, in the opinion of the King's friends, to allow him and ourselves to suffer a defeat, and we must not do that.³

We are all as anxious as ever for your leaving Paris without delay

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IX, pp. 407, 408.*

² *Ibid., pp. 405, 406.* ³ *Ibid., p. 422.*

[said Lord Liverpool in answer to the above], though we have not thought it right to give you an official order for this purpose . . . I cannot, however, avoid again repeating that whatever may be the ground which it may be proper to assign for your quitting Paris, we shall not feel easy till we hear of your having landed at Dover, or at all events, of your being out of the French territory; and in leaving the precise time and mode of departure to your discretion, we most earnestly entreat you to return to England with as little delay as possible.¹

I received this morning your letter of the 13th [wrote the Duke on November 16th] and will make immediate arrangements for quitting Paris. These will take some days, and I shall not announce to the King or of course to anybody else, my intention till I shall be quite prepared to put it into execution. . . .

No man is a judge in his own case; but I confess that I don't see the necessity for being in a hurry to remove me from hence.²

In spite of his acquiescence, however, it was several months before he finally quitted the post of danger.

The report that I am about to quit my situation has been published in the English, and copied from them into the French newspapers [wrote the Duke to Lord Liverpool on November 18th], and has created so much anxiety here that I think it worth sending you another messenger. Those who know the state of affairs consider my departure as a defeat. Those who do not, and the public in general, consider it as a sign that the two countries are not on such good terms as they ought to be, or as they really are. . . .

I really don't like the way in which I am going away. To take me away eventually is quite right, as I entertain no doubt, from many circumstances which have come to my knowledge, that my presence here is disagreeable to many; and there is in Paris such a confusion of ideas regarding right and wrong . . . that I entertain no doubt that if I were deprived of the King's protection I should be detained, and that this measure would be justified by some sophistry or other, and approved by the nation at large. But we must not disgrace ourselves by the manner in which we get ourselves out of the situation in which we are placed. We must not act with precipitation. There is really no evidence of danger, excepting general discontent; and you are going to get yourselves and your friends here into difficulties long before there is any necessity for it. . . .

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IX, pp. 430, 431.*

² *Ibid., p. 434.*

I must say that I feel my own character a little concerned in this transaction, and I hope, therefore, that the government will allow their object to be accomplished in the way in which I shall be the least dissatisfied.¹

In spite of all rumours of danger, the Duke continued calmly on his course, and outwardly altered none of his arrangements, even allowing his children to come to him for their holidays.

On December 24th the war between England and America ceased, and there was one excuse the less for withdrawing the British Ambassador from Paris.

Nevertheless to the great relief of the British nation the Duke was shortly to leave the French capital, for his presence was now urgently needed at the Congress of Vienna* to replace Lord Castlereagh, the British representative who had been recalled to England on Parliamentary business.

There was now a legitimate reason for the Duke's withdrawal, for, as the British Government pointed out, there was no one else in whom the country had so much confidence, and who could so fittingly take Lord Castlereagh's place.

He therefore accepted the position and set out for Vienna on January 24th, accompanied by Colonel Freemantle, and the young attaché Lord William Lennox.

Our journey was a most delightful one [records young Lennox] . . . The Duke travelled in an English carriage with his valet, Tesson, on a seat on the roof, and a courier in advance. Anxious to lose no time on the road, we breakfasted and dined in the carriage, our meals consisted of game, pies, cold fowls and tongue, *pates de foie gras*, with the choicest pure claret from the Duke's own cellars.

With the exception of four hours during the night, we never stopped upon the road between Paris and Vienna, and here the Duke's powers of falling at once to sleep came into effect; for no sooner had we reached the inn, than . . . his Grace went immediately to bed, and at the hour named for starting, he appeared perfectly refreshed, having slept, dressed and breakfasted during that brief period; while we the two attachés,

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IX, pp. 435, 436, 437.*

* The Congress of Vienna was assembled to settle European affairs after the abdication of Napoleon and declaration of Peace.

looked . . . extremely seedy, having passed our time in eating supper, and then lying down in our clothes before the hot German stove, until it was time to make our toilet previous to departure.

The Duke arrived in Vienna on February 3rd and was received with great enthusiasm by all the nobilities, and by none more heartily than by Prince Talleyrand, ^{the} French representative; who gave a state dinner in his honour and invited the members of the Congress to meet him. "I was very pleased", said he, "that it should be the French Legation which introduced him."¹

The Duke on his part showed himself worthy of the compliment paid him, for he was as jealous of the honour of France as of that of his own country, and refused to be *pumped* concerning her, or to admit that things were as bad in that country as people tried to make out. The day after his arrival in Vienna he received a visit from the Emperor of Russia, who had come on a reconnoitring expedition, and commenced as follows:

"Everything is going wrong in France, is it not?"

"By no means," replied the Duke; "the King is greatly beloved and respected, and behaves with exemplary prudence."

¹ *Wellington in Private Life*, pp. 90, 91.

² *Talleyrand, Mémoirs*, Vol. III, p. 34.

* Talleyrand, Périgord, Charles Maurice de, Prince, 1754-1838. The famous French diplomatist and statesman who managed to keep to the fore, and had a finger in the pie of the government of France during the Revolution, Directory, Empire, and Bourbon Restoration. Started life as a priest and became a Bishop, but afterwards left the church. He did not possess a very high reputation for stability of character; and was looked upon as a professional politician whose first objective was to keep himself in high places. The Duke of Wellington, however, considered him to be a better man than his reputation. "I came here to defend him in the House of Lords," said he. "When Talleyrand heard of my defence . . . he burst into tears and said, 'C'est le seul homme qui a jamais dit du bien de moi' [He is the only man who has ever said anything good about me]" (Stanhope, *Conversations with the Duke of Wellington*, p. 102).

"You could tell me nothing that would give me so much pleasure," replied the Emperor, "and how about the army?"

"As far as offensive warfare goes, no matter against what power," Lord Wellington answered, "the army is as good as ever it was; but in questions of home policy it is worth nothing."

These answers [observed Talleyrand] . . . impressed the Emperor more than he cared to show. . . .

It is not to the Emperor of Russia alone that the Duke of Wellington eulogizes your Majesty [continues the French statesman], wherever he goes he sings your praises not limiting himself to general terms, but entering into details and citing facts. . . . He admitted that everything in France was not yet quite as one could wish, but he added that all would come right in time.¹

Lord Wellington's conduct touches, but does not surprise me [wrote the French King in reply], he is a loyal man. . . .²

The Congress of Vienna was very similar to Peace Conferences of the present day where, varied interests clash one against the other, and fear of war rather than love of peace lies beneath negotiations. Indeed, Castlereagh appeared to think that the greatest achievement to which the Congress could hope to aspire would be to stave off war.

You will perceive we make but little way here [he had written the Duke of Wellington on December 7th]; as yet I see no real spirit of accommodation; perhaps it is too much to expect that this Congress should differ so much from its predecessors. It unfortunately happens that never at any former period was so much spoil thrown loose for the world to scramble for.³

Into this choppy sea sailed the cheerful Wellington, full of good feeling for all the world, and endowed with boundless energy for work or play.

He had, however, but a short time to indulge in either at Vienna, for in the month of March news arrived of Napoleon's escape from Elba which altered the entire complexion of the Conference. Private squabbles were now forgotten in the

¹ *Talleyrand, Memoirs, Vol. III, p. 34.*

² *Ibid., p. 52.*

³ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IX, p. 465.*

public danger, and on March 25th the Powers once more resolved to band themselves together to resist the disturber of Europe's peace, and at a conference of the leading European Generals the Command of the British and Allied forces in the Netherlands was entrusted to the Duke of Wellington.

He therefore left Vienna on March 29th and travelling with great rapidity reached Brussels on the night of the 4th April.

Chapter Nineteen

WAVELETS FROM WATERLOO

Take my word for it, if you had seen but one day of war you would pray to Almighty God that you might never see such a thing again. WELLINGTON.

SURELY no battle has been so dissected and torn to pieces as the Battle of Waterloo. Wading through the immense mass of material written upon the subject, the speculative and contentious arguments concerning it, one loses entirely the form and outline of the event itself.

I am really disgusted with and ashamed of all [the written matter] that I have seen of the Battle of Waterloo [wrote the Duke of Wellington in 1816]. The number of writings upon it would lead the world to suppose that the British army had never fought a battle before. . . .¹

Since the Duke wrote these words, the written material concerning Waterloo has increased and multiplied to such an extent that the ordinary individual scarce knows where to turn to get any idea of the event itself; for it is the event itself, and not the theories concerning it, that is of interest to the ordinary individual.

In the face of so many difficulties, it is perhaps better to dwell most upon the human side of the affair, and from the narratives of those who took part in it try to piece together a story of human interest.

It must, however, be remembered that each eye-witness can only tell of what came under his own immediate observa-

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. X, p. 507.*

tion, and that to get a perfect conception of any battle in its entirety is practically impossible. One can but attempt to gleam a few impressions which will leave a vivid imprint upon the mind. "The Battle of Waterloo is undoubtedly one of the most interesting events of modern times," wrote the Duke of Wellington to one who had written an article concerning it, "but the Duke entertains no hopes of ever seeing an account of all its details which shall be true."¹

The Duke never encouraged the writing of a history of the battle for fear of hurting anyone.

If it is to be a history [he observes] it must be the truth, and the whole truth, or it will do more harm than good But if a true history is written, what will become of the reputation of half of those who have acquired reputation, and who deserve it for their gallantry, but who if their mistakes and casual misconduct were made public, would not be so well thought of?²

In selecting the eyes through which we are going to peep at the Battle of Waterloo, care must be taken that they are the eyes which actually saw the events described, and second-hand stories dropped into the ears of idle gossips must be carefully avoided. There were plenty of these even during the Duke's lifetime :

. . . It is now quite certain [he wrote in 1817] that I was not present and did not command in the battle of Quatre Bras, and it is very doubtful whether I was present in the battle of Waterloo. It is not so easy to dispose of the British army as it is of an individual : but although it is admitted they were present, the brave Belgians, or the brave Prussians, won the battle ; and neither in histories, pamphlets, plays nor pictures, are the British troops ever noticed.³

Then for the solid background upon which the pictures can be hung we must take the cold bare facts of official reports, and the Duke's own despatches.

Nothing can be further from the truth than the popular conception of Waterloo. The ordinary citizen holds a picture

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. X, p. 507.*

² *Ibid., Vol. XIV, p. 619.* ³ *Ibid., Vol. XII, p. 155.*

in his mind of an unprepared army, and a general surprised at a ball, from which he rushes hastily away to the battlefield of Waterloo.

Whereas this same army had been for more than two months in preparation, and was ready to move at a moment's notice. Its General knew of Napoleon's advance, and had set his troops in movement before he went to the ball. Quatre Bras and not Waterloo was the action which took place on the succeeding day; Waterloo not being fought until two days later.

The arrival of the Duke from Vienna on April 4th was hailed with relief by the people of Brussels, and by that army he was to command.

We are all, as you may suppose [wrote Captain Bowles], most happy at being under our old Commander the Duke, whom I have not yet seen, but hear is looking fat* and in high spirits. His reputation stands fully as high in this country as either in England or Spain, and the Dutch, Hanoverians, and I believe even the Belgians, are delighted at being under his command.¹

His advent, however, meant the supersession of the Prince of Orange, who had been in command of the troops assembled in the Netherlands until the Duke's arrival.

But though his vanity was, perhaps, a little hurt at the openly expressed relief caused by the presence of the Duke, yet there was no bitterness in the young man's heart towards the one to whom he had to relinquish his command;

although it would have been mortifying to me to give it up, under the present circumstances, to anybody else [he wrote to Lord Bathurst], yet to him I do it with pleasure; and he may be well assured that under all circumstances I will second him upon a larger scale with the same zeal I served him formerly as his aide-de-camp. I shall never forget that period of my life; I owe everything to it; and if I now may hope

¹ *Malmesbury Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 436.*

* Relatively only, of course, for the Duke and superfluous flesh never had more than the most distant bowing acquaintance.

to be of use to my country, it is to the experience I acquired under him that I have to attribute it.¹

It was a pity that the army the Duke now commanded contained so few of those tried and trusty fighters who had fought their way under him through Portugal and Spain and into France ; that matchless Peninsular army called by him the finest army in the world, with which he would go anywhere and do anything.

But, alas, the parts of this wonderful machine were scattered, and it was a very heterogeneous collection of raw material to which the Duke now set his guiding hand, formed of a scratch lot of troops of weak corps and inefficient 2nd battalions sent into the Netherlands for the military possession of these countries pending the results of the negotiations of the Congress of Vienna. “I wish to God you had a better army”,² Torrens wrote him after a visit to Belgium ; a sentiment which the Duke found himself constantly reiterating during the days preceding its trial of strength.

I have got an infamous army [he was writing after a month's preparation], very weak and ill equipped, and a very inexperienced Staff. In my opinion they are doing nothing in England. They have not raised a man ; they have not called out the militia either in England or Ireland ; are unable to send me anything ; and they have not sent a message to Parliament about the money.³

The Duke was further exasperated by interference with the selection of General Officers and his Staff ; a selection in which it might be supposed the Commander-in-Chief in the Field had some slight interest. But the Lords Omnipotent at the Horse Guards thought otherwise, and the Duke's life was made a burden by constant requests from officers for appointments which he had no power to grant.

I have had the honour of receiving your letter . . . applying to me to be employed with this army [he informed a General Officer, a trifle

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. IX, p. 600.* ² *Ibid., Vol. X, p. 49.*

³ *Dispatches, Vol. XII, p. 358.*

testily], which, considering that you are at the Horse Guards, has not a little surprised me.

If you will speak to Sir H. Torrens, he will tell you that I have nothing to say to any appointment to the Staff of this army of any rank . . . I beg you to apply in the quarter in which you will certainly succeed, without reference to my wishes, whenever there shall be a command vacant for you . . .¹

. . . I command a very small British army, with a very large British Staff, to which my superiors are making additions every day [he wrote another applicant], and it must naturally be expected that, having for several years commanded armies abroad, there must be officers of whose assistance I am desirous, and which indeed must be necessary to me.”²

The Powers at home, however, were not of this opinion, and continued to annoy the Commander-in-Chief of the British armies in the Netherlands, by crowding him out with officers he did not want.

To tell you the truth [he wrote Lord Bathurst at last in desperation], I am not very well pleased . . . with the manner in which the Horse Guards have conducted themselves towards me. It will be admitted that the army is not a very good one; and, being composed as it is, I might have expected that the Generals and Staff formed by me in the last war would have been allowed to come to me again: but instead of that, I am overloaded with people I have never seen before; and it appears to be purposely intended to keep those out of my way whom I wished to have.³

In contrast to these annoyances from home, was the good feeling existing between Lord Wellington and the Allies, especially the Prussians, who though not under his command were prepared to act in concert with him, and showed every disposition to fall in with his suggestions;

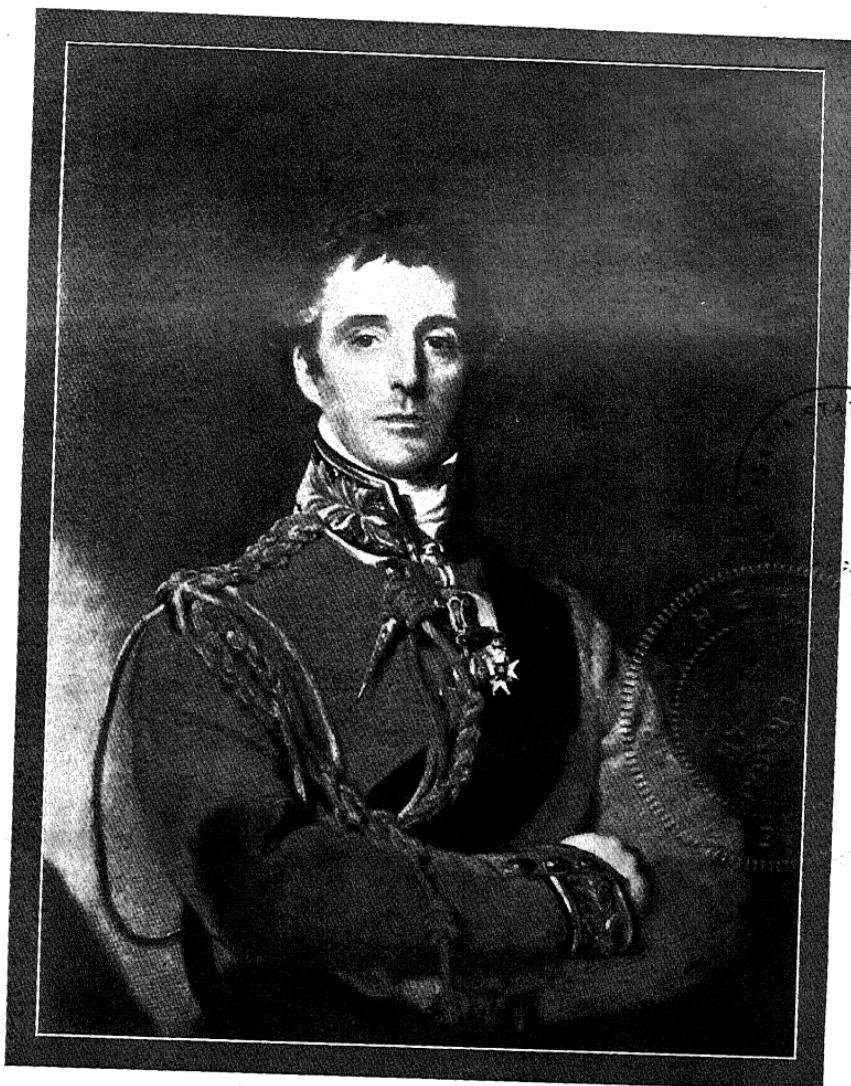
. . . It is sufficient for us that the Duke of Wellington wishes to see us further forward [wrote a Prussian General in reply to a request from the Duke that he would move his army up between Charleroi and Namur], and the Prussian army will obey his orders with pleasure and confidence, hoping thus to prove its respect and submission to a General revered by the whole universe.⁴

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. XII, pp. 339, 340.

² *Ibid.* p. 415.

³ *Supp. Dispatches*, Vol. X, p. 219.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 47.



“THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE BRITISH FORCES
IN THE NETHERLANDS.”

And when, early in May, the Prussian Commander-in-Chief, Marshal Blücher,* arrived, a loyal and cordial comradeship was immediately established between the two Commanders which continued throughout their joint operations.

One of the most complicated matters in the coming campaign was providing for the subsistence of the various Allied armies. The Duke was most solicitous that the countries which were the seat of war, or through which the armies would have to pass, should not suffer in any way from having to support these armies, and wished to establish the same just and honest system of provisioning which he had himself used in the Peninsula, viz. that goods supplied should be paid for at their proper market value. A proposition that supplies should be paid for at a diminished rate drew from him an indignant protest.

In no well-regulated country [he observed] can the property of subjects be taken from them for less than its fair value; and if any public burden is to be borne by any country, it is best that the fiscal means of imposing it should proceed regularly from the sovereign authority, and that each individual should receive the full value of his private property from the same source.¹

The other Allies, however, did not altogether relish these quixotic notions or agree with the idea of carrying on war in such a polite manner:

... I know from practice a little of the gentlemen we have to deal with, and the system of their armies [wrote General Sir Charles Stewart from Vienna, where the conference concerning the subsisting of the different armies was being held]; and if we are to go on on cordial terms, I think we must neither oppose them too violently in their own systems, nor force upon them our ideas of justice in a country where they make war . . . though you may convince them of their injustice, and prove to them, as *you* have done heretofore, the advantage of an army acting under discipline and *payment* in the enemies' country, still

¹ *Dispatches*, Vol. XII, p. 383.

* Blücher, Gebhard Leberecht von, Field-Marshal of Prussia, Prince of Wahlstadt of Silesia, 1742-1819.

it is too early to make the . . . Prussian, . . . Austrian, or . . . Russian come into your honourable and liberal mode of warfare. It is a great point to have established in some degree an arrangement; and although the prices fixed are very far under the value of the articles, I hail the plan as a *shadow* of organization and equity towards the resources of the countries . . .

You may think, from what I have written, I have not been brought up in your school. I can only say that, however I worship your principles, I endeavour to give you my ideas of the practicability of working the machine here . . .¹

Nothing, however, would make Lord Wellington give up his strong ideas on these subjects, and just before the actual commencement of hostilities we find him discussing in a letter to Prince Metternich the Austrian Minister, a convention which he had proposed should be entered into with the King of France for the subsisting of the Allied armies on French territory.

With regard to the Netherlands, the Duke was equally solicitous, and as his own army drew its subsistence particularly from this country, the difference between the fixed payment inaugurated by the other Allies and the real market value, was to be borne by the British Government.

I suppose [he informed Vienna], the Allies do not wish us . . . to take, or in other words *rob*, subsistence for our armies in the country of the King of the Netherlands; if we choose to take money from our own pockets, and not from theirs, to pay for it.²

The war-like preparations going on in Belgium by no means interfered with the gaiety of its capital, and Brussels at that period so full of distinguished personages was at the zenith of its season. Balls, dinner-parties, and festivities of all kinds were in full swing, whilst the brilliant reviews which were constantly being held, added their touch of military splendour.

The Duke, as was his wont, entered whole-heartedly into

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. X, pp. 232, 233.*

² *Despatches, Vol. XII, p. 386.*

all the gaieties, and entertained lavishly himself; yet underneath it all he was ever watchful, though he turned towards the world a care-free and inscrutable front, and kept society supplied with as much and as little as he deemed it good for it to know.

Meeting that arch-gossip Creevey* at a dinner party, he parried his thirst for information with frivolous banalities, telling him he was sure that a republic was to be got up in France, which would settle Napoleon once and for all, and, "*that it would never come to fighting with the Allies . . . I retired*", observed the baffled Creevey in disgust, "with the impression of his (the Duke) having made a very sorry figure, in giving no indication of superior talents."¹

Meanwhile Napoleon's war-like preparations were going steadily forward, and the Franco-Belgian frontier was lined with his troops. Nevertheless, with so much secrecy did he disguise his movements and intentions, that it was impossible to foresee exactly when and where he was going to spring, and the Allied Commanders were kept perpetually on the stretch.

Early in June, however, it was evident that matters were drawing to a crisis, and when Lady Georgiana Lennox† consulted the Duke about having a picnic party in the neighbourhood of Tournay or Lille, she was met with a decided, "No, better let that drop."²

But within the town of Brussels the world continued to amuse itself, and on June the 15th the Duchess of Richmond gave that ball which has since become so famous in history.

As it happens she could not have selected a more fateful

¹ *The Creevey Papers, Vol. I, pp. 226, 227.*

² *Lady de Ros, Reminiscences, p. 121.*

* There had been a great exodus to the Continent from England after the Peace of 1814, and Creevey with his wife and step-daughters were making a sojourn in Brussels.

† Daughter of the Duke of Richmond, afterwards Lady de Ros.

day, for it was the day chosen by Napoleon for the opening of his offensive which began in the early hours of the morning by an attack on the Prussian outposts at Thuin.

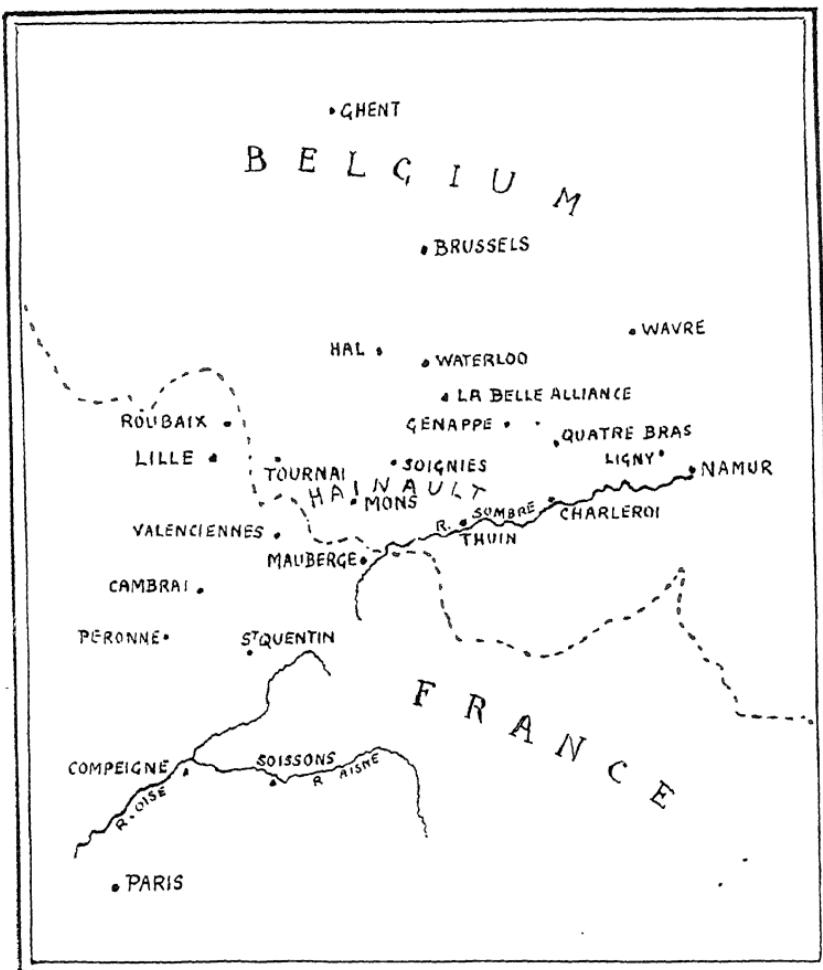
The first authentic account of this affair was brought to the Duke about three o'clock in the afternoon by the Prince of Orange on his return from the outposts of the Netherlands' army, which account was shortly afterwards corroborated by General Von Müffling, the Prussian officer attached to the Duke of Wellington's Headquarters.

The Duke, however, walked warily ; this might only be an affair of outposts ; a bluff to draw his attention from the main attack. There was no need to be too hasty, the machinery of his army was so perfectly adjusted that it could immediately be swung into any required direction ; he had only to put his hand upon the lever. This he proceeded to do and underneath the gaiety of Brussels the whirring of the machinery might have been distinctly heard, as orders to hold themselves in readiness to move flashed through the Allied army.

But the social world of Brussels was too much occupied with the coming ball to be apprehensive, even had they noticed anything unusual. The fit of a gown, the colour of a ribbon, the set of a curl, all these important matters occupied at least the feminine mind to the exclusion of all else. Besides, Brussels was used to living on the edge of a volcano, and rumours of war and movements of troops had been their portion for upwards of two months.

Above all things the Commander-in-Chief was anxious to keep the public in this frame of mind, so with a heart full of weighty matters, he prepared to dress for the ball. His toilet, however, was not allowed to interfere with the business of the campaign, and De Lancey (the Deputy Quarter-Master-General), reporting for the latest orders, found the Duke in shirt and slippers "standing looking over a map with a Prussian General (probably Von Müffling)," ¹

¹ *A Week at Waterloo*, p. 44.



FRANCE AND BELGIUM

Section of Map showing Important Positions in the Waterloo Campaign

and presently fresh orders were issued setting the Duke's army definitely in movement.

Nothing, however, was to be allowed to interfere with the ball, and those officers who were invited were permitted to attend.

But in spite of all the Duke's care, rumours of the situation had preceded him to the ball-room, and when he arrived somewhat late, Lady Georgiana Lennox stopped dancing and went up to him to learn their foundation. "Yes, they are true," he replied gravely, "we are off to-morrow."¹

But though hiding nothing from his intimate friends, to the outer world he was as cheerful as ever, and an aide-de-camp present speaks of, "the calm serenity that beamed over the countenance of the Duke . . ."²

A lady friend, though, fancied she detected beneath his calm an unusual expression of care and anxiety.

I sat next him on a sopha a long time [she records], but his mind seemed quite preoccupied, and although he spoke to me in the kindest manner possible, yet frequently in the middle of a sentence he stopped abruptly and called to some officer, giving him directions . . .³

At supper, too, it was noticed that the Prince of Orange came up to the Duke's table and "whispered some minutes to his Grace, who only said he had no fresh orders to give, and recommended the Prince to go back to his quarters and go to bed".⁴

Some twenty minutes later the Duke himself rose to depart, and as he took leave of his host, whispered to him to know if there was a good map in the house. The Duke of Richmond took him into his study which opened off the supper-room.

"Napoleon has *humbugged* me, by G——," [observed the Commander-in-Chief as the door was closed] "he has gained twenty-four hours' march on me."

"What do you intend doing?" [observed the Duke of Richmond].

¹ *Lady de Ros, Reminiscences*, p. 123.

² *Wellington in Private Life*, p. 210.

³ *Sir Herbert Maxwell, Vol. II*, p. 13, quoting from the *Diary of Lady Hamilton Dalrymple*.

⁴ *Malmesbury Correspondence, Vol. II*, p. 445.

"I have ordered the army to concentrate at Quatre Bras, but we shall not stop him there, and if so I must fight him *here* (at the same time passing his thumbnail over the position of Waterloo)"¹

After which prophetic utterance, Arthur Duke of Wellington took leave of his old friend and departed.*

But though he had gained twenty-four hours upon the British Commander, Napoleon had by no means surprised him, for the Duke well knew, that to steal a march upon him was what Napoleon had for some time past been carefully preparing.

With a knowledge, therefore, that all his arrangements were in perfect order to meet just such an eventuality, the Duke returned to his quarters, went to bed, and was soon sound asleep.

And as he slept his soldiers were filing out of Brussels, whilst those already ahead, marched continuously forward towards the battle-front.

By eight o'clock of the following morning their Commander joined them, as rested and refreshed, and in company with his staff, he rode high-heartedly out of Brussels: ". . . There he goes, God bless him," said a lady's-maid, as she opened her mistress's shutters, "and he will not come back till he is King of France."²

He was not, however, riding out in quest of a kingdom, but to find peace, and set a lawful King upon his throne, and the first step towards this twofold ambition led him to Quatre Bras, where he had ordered the concentration of his army. He arrived there about mid-day, when having satisfied himself as to the disposition of the troops assembled there, under the Prince of Orange, he rode over to Ligny to visit Blücher's army.

¹ *Malmesbury Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 445.

² *Ellesmere*, p. 279.

* The whole of this story beginning with the conversation with the Prince of Orange, is recorded by Captain Bowles who was present at the Ball. The conversation between the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of Richmond was repeated to Bowles by the latter two minutes after it occurred.

Of the Prussian disposition he was not unduly enthusiastic.

We each of us know our army best [he observed to a Prussian general] ; I should not have formed mine in this defensive position as yours is. I should have held them further back, and would have thus protected them from the effect of the French artillery.¹

To Colonel Henry Hardinge (the British officer attached to the Prussian Staff) he did not mince matters. "If they fight here", said he, they will be damnably mauled"² ; a prophecy which was verified almost immediately after it was uttered, when a large force of the enemy assailed Blücher's position and the Battle of Ligny was fought. It lasted until late in the evening ; when after fighting and maintaining their ground with the utmost valour in a particularly fierce and bloody contest, the Prussians were finally forced to retreat. In the battle, Blücher himself was injured by his horse receiving a mortal wound and falling upon him, and as he lay helpless, he was twice ridden over by the French cavalry.

The British Commander had left the Prussians before the battle commenced, and galloped back to his own position at Quatre Bras, where in the course of the afternoon he was also attacked. Some heavy fighting ensued, and though the British held their position and won the battle, the end of the day showed a large casualty list. That the Duke himself was not amongst the casualties was again remarkable, for it was said that he exposed himself more than on any previous occasion, "and that his escaping without a wound was wonderful".³

It must have been a strenuous day for the British Commander-in-Chief, for besides fighting a battle, he had ridden from Brussels to Quatre Bras, and from Quatre Bras to Ligny and back, 43 miles in all, before the battle commenced. Yet it is likely that he was quite unaware of any fatigue, for apart from his physical fitness and iron constitution, the moment

¹ *Ellesmere*, p. 286.

² *Stanhope*, p. 109.

³ *Jackson*, p. 20.

of battle seemed to pour into him a fresh stream of living energy. Passionately as he hated war, there is no doubt that he entered a super strata of existence whilst waging it, and touched the apex of all his powers.

The Duke's army after the battle bivouacked upon the field of Quatre Bras, whilst he himself slept at Genappe; but shortly after daylight on the following day he was back amongst his troops again.

His first anxiety was to get into communication with the Prussian army, for though he knew they had been in action on the previous day, he was not certain of their present whereabouts, nor of Blücher's intentions. He therefore sent his aide-de-camp, Colonel Gordon, over to Ligny with two squadrons of Hussars to investigate, and whilst waiting for news walked about in conversation with various of his officers.

At length Gordon returned, and whispered to his Chief that the field of Ligny was deserted and the Prussians in retreat, whereupon the Duke,

without the least change of countenance gave him some orders . . . then turned round . . . and said, "Old Blücher has had a damned good licking and gone back to Wavre eighteen miles. As he has gone back we must go too. I suppose in England they will say we have been licked. I can't help it, as they are gone back, we must go too." He made all the arrangements for retiring without moving from the spot on which he was standing [says Captain Bowles, who was present], and it certainly did not occupy him five minutes.¹

Then whilst his army got into movement he lay down upon the ground, covered his head with a newspaper, "and appeared to fall asleep".²

With the exception of a cavalry affair, the army was allowed to retreat in peace and by six o'clock in the evening had arrived on the position of Waterloo, where they bivouacked for the night.

¹ *Malmesbury Correspondence, Vol. II, p. 446.*

² *Waterloo Letters, p. 154.*

It was the eve of mighty doings, and as Lord Wellington's army slept upon its arms, the great god Jove crashed out his salvos of thunder and lightning, heralding the last and greatest triumph of his warrior son.

But the soldiers could well have dispensed with these salutes, for it is not pleasant lying out in a thunderstorm and waking in the morning drenched with rain.

The veterans of the Peninsular army, however, were used to it ; to them a thunderstorm was almost the necessary prelude to a victory. The morrow, too, was a Sunday, the day on which all their greatest triumphs had been won ; if they reflected upon these things at all, it is likely they did so with satisfaction.

But alas, there were but too few of these tried and trusty fighters to mix with the raw young army which lay drenched to the skin upon the morrow's battlefield.

The Duke passed the night at the Inn at Waterloo ; it was but a short night, however, for he was up before daylight on the following morning, and at 3 a.m. sat down to write several precautionary letters.

Pray keep the English quiet if you can [he wrote the British Minister in Brussels]. Let them all prepare to move, but neither be in a hurry or a fright, as all will yet turn out well.¹

As I am sending a messenger to Bruxelles [he told Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster] * I write to you one line to tell you that I think you ought to make your preparations, as should Lord Mountnorris,† to remove from Bruxelles to Antwerp in case such a measure should be necessary. . . .

¹ *Dispatches, Vol. XII, p. 476.*

* The heroine of a mild flirtation with the Duke of Wellington, which became famous on account of a libel action brought by the Duke and the lady's husband against the St. James' Chronicle, the editor of which had to pay £2,000 damages for a series of libellous publications.

† The father of Lady Webster.

The course of the operations may oblige me to uncover Bruxelles for a moment, and may expose that town to the enemy . . .

I will give you the earliest intimation of any danger that may come to my knowledge : at present I know of none.¹

A third letter was to the Duc de Berri, who commanded the Royalist troops, advising the removal of the King of France from Ghent to Antwerp.

Having thus prepared for the worst, the Duke dismissed it from his mind which had no room for anything but thoughts of victory. "I will be answerable for everything", he told his weeping landlady at parting, patting her reassuringly upon the shoulder ; "no one shall suffer from the French today except the soldiers."²

But just how much they were to suffer was mercifully hidden from his vision, as full of high confidence he went out to join them.

Shortly before the battle commenced, a further contingent of Lord Wellington's beloved Peninsular veterans joined him, their advent heralded by Harry Smith, who had been sent on to the Commander-in-Chief for orders.

It was a happy meeting.

"Hallo, Smith, where are you from last?"

"From General Lambert's Brigade, and they from America."

"What have you got?"

"The 4th, the 27th, and the 40th ; the 81st remain in Brussels."

"Ah, I know, I know ; but the others, are they in good order?"

"Excellent, my lord, and very strong."

"That's all right, for I shall soon want every man."

One of his staff said, "I do not think they will attack today."

"Nonsense," said the Duke ; "the columns are already forming and I think I have discerned where the weight of the attack will be made. I shall be attacked before an hour."

It was delightful [says Harry Smith] to see His Grace that morning on his noble horse Copenhagen—in high spirits and very animated, but so cool and so clear in the issue of his orders, that it was impossible not fully to comprehend what he said ; delightful also to observe what

¹ *Supp. Despatches, Vol. X, p. 501.* ² *Croker Papers, Vol. I, p. 67.*

his wonderful eye anticipated, whilst some of his staff were of opinion the attack was not in progress.¹

Not long after the above episode the battle commenced.

The position of Waterloo, with its opposing ridges and flat ground in between, was a most spectacular one. It was the battlefield of a small boy's dreams, with both sides directly facing each other and having only to advance and hammer each other.

All through the day the rival artillery thundered forth from their respective ridges, whilst the cavalry and infantry charges were made across the intervening valley.

The battle, too, was a straightforward affair, "a pounding match", the Duke called it. ". . . Napoleon", said he, "did not manœuvre at all. He just moved forward in the old style, in columns, and was driven off in the old style."²

In the rear of the Duke's position in the centre, and a little behind the hills, stood the village of Mont St. Jean, whilst the hamlet of La Belle Alliance lay behind the centre of Napoleon's ridge. The battle-field was intersected by two high roads, the one running from Charleroi to Brussels passing through the villages of both Mont St. Jean and La Belle Alliance.

The two main objects of interest in the Duke's front line were the Château Hougoumont, with its outbuildings, gardens and orchards, which stood in the front of his position on the right; and the farm of La Haye Sainte in front of his centre. These two posts were garrisoned by Allied troops and the fight to obtain possession of them was one of the main themes of the battle.

The Duke had undertaken to fight Napoleon at Waterloo in collaboration with Blücher's forces; for the task of meeting the superb veterans of France with the very scratch army at his command had not been in his contemplation.

¹ *Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, pp. 268, 269, 270.*

² *Dispatches, Vol. XII, p. 529.*

Nevertheless as it turned out this was just exactly what he was called upon to do ; for the gallant old Blücher on his march to join his comrade, met with a series of misfortunes.

First of all a fire broke out in the principal street of Wavre, which delayed the march of the main body of his army, and created a panic owing to its proximity to the ammunition wagons. Then, when they were finally on the way, the roads, owing to the recent heavy rains, were found to be almost impassable, the guns of the artillery sinking axle deep into the mire, so that it seemed to the dispirited men as if they were asked to perform a miracle.

Perhaps it was only the inspiration of their lion-hearted leader and his brave determination not to break faith, that enabled his troops to arrive in time to give any co-operation at all. For though they were in action between five and six o'clock in the afternoon at the village of Planchenoit, in the rear of Napoleon's right, it was not until the end of the day when all was over and the French on the run, that any Prussian troops appeared on the actual field of Waterloo.

Posterity has been guilty of a lot of petty controversy concerning the relative merits of the British and the Prussians in this Battle, and a feeling of rivalry and partisanship has crept up, which never existed in the minds of the two great Commanders, who knew that each of their armies were a part of the same scheme, and that each worthily did their part.

The merit of the Duke's army lay in hanging on and beating the French without the aid upon the battlefield of its powerful ally. Had the Duke been beaten before the Prussians arrived, Napoleon could have turned all his attention on Blücher's army, which might have resulted in stalemate and the war would have been much prolonged.

The merit of Blücher's army lies in having surmounted its difficulties in time to make its weight felt in the balance of the scales of victory.

Perhaps, too, their tardy arrival was one of the salient

features in the termination of the war, for had Blücher with his huge army been present on the field of Waterloo at the beginning of the day, would Napoleon have risked a battle against such odds? The essence of his strategy had been to keep the two armies apart and deal with them separately.

The task, therefore, which the Duke had to demand of his army was that of hanging on, one of the hardest and most trying that the soldier can be called upon to do. All through the long hours of that interminable day the Duke's army hung on. Formed into squares, the infantry stood like rocks before the fierce onslaughts of the enemy. Wave after wave of the French cavalry broke against them, and the massed attacks of cavalry and infantry drove into them, whilst the sweeping, scorching fire of the artillery took ceaseless toll of their devoted ranks. Yet nothing could break those rock-like barriers which guarded Europe's peace.

But even rocks must suffer through perpetual blasting, and at the end of the day those gallant rocks were sadly chipped and scarred. Here stood a square silent and still, composed of dead men, pressed together in their places; here another had become a triangle with one of its sides blown completely away, and yet as each man fell the command 'close up', 'close up' rang like a monotonous dirge in the ears of those who must still fight on.

It was never exactly a soft job to be on Lord Wellington's staff, but at Waterloo it was more hazardous than ever.

Probably there never was a battle [observes one of his aides-de-camp] when a General-in-Chief afforded to the Headquarters Staff better opportunities of witnessing its principal events than at Waterloo; for wherever there was an attack, thither went the Duke, exposing himself to the hottest fire, as if . . . he could catch and pocket the enemy bullets.

. . . Nothing that occurred, seemed to produce any effect on the Duke . . . His countenance and demeanour were at all times quite calm, rarely speaking to anyone, save to give an order, or send a message; indeed he generally rode quite alone; that is no one was at his side,

seeming unconscious even of the presence of his own troops, whilst his eye kept scanning intently those of his great opponent.¹

For the first few hours of the day the Allied Army held its own, in spite of a ceaseless pounding from the French artillery who greatly outnumbered the Allies in guns, and perpetual charges of cavalry and infantry which poured over the plain like waves of the sea, receding only to advance, and hurling themselves again and again with unabated fury against the devoted Allied squares.

But between three and four o'clock matters assumed a more sinister aspect, and a disaster in the region of the Allied centre altered the complexion of the battle.

This was the loss of La Haye Sainte, which finally succumbed, after a gallant, but hopeless struggle, to the renewed fury of the French attack.

The powers of this devoted little garrison had been ebbing very low. The continuous contest in which it had been engaged had taken a heavy toll of its numbers, added to which ammunition was running out, and though the gallant commander Major Baring, sent repeated requests to be supplied, there was no means of getting it to him.

There came a time when he was reduced to a handful of men with two or three cartridges apiece, and it was at this moment that the French redoubled their attack.

Baring had but two courses to pursue, both of which must end in the loss of his position ; the one to remain and allow his remnant of heroes to be massacred, and the other to abandon the post and fall back upon the main position where his men could still be of service.

In the name of common-sense and humanity he chose the latter.

The loss of this position was a severe blow to the Allied army, for with the French in possession it was as if a hornet's nest was in its heart. French guns at close range swept its centre, rifle fire raked all those in its vicinity, whilst from

¹ *Jackson, p. 43.*

this point of vantage fresh attacks were continuously launched throughout the day.

The task of hanging on now became a serious problem for the Allied army.

Yet nothing could shake the army's Commander, who went quietly about his business, and never thought of defeat.

His calm confidence communicated itself to his army in spite of the gravity of the situation : "We had a notion", said one of the senior officers, "that while he was there nothing could go wrong."¹

Yet it was surely by a decree of Providence he remained amongst them ;

indeed [observes another officer] his escaping without a wound was marvellous. On one occasion especially I trembled for his safety ; it was during an attack . . . between 3 and 4 o'clock, when he remained for many minutes exposed to a heavy fire of musketry. All the staff except a single A.D.C. had received a signal to keep back in order not to attract the enemy's fire ; we remained therefore under the brow of the elevated ground, and the better to keep out of observation dismounted. As I looked over my saddle I could just trace the outlines of the Duke and his horse amidst the smoke . . . whilst the balls—and they came thickly—hissed harmlessly over our heads. It was a time of intense anxiety, for had the Duke fallen, heaven only knows what might have been the result of the fight !²

The advent of the Prussians was now most ardently desired, and many anxious glances were cast in the direction from which they were expected to arrive.

At length, between five and six o'clock, firing was heard in the vicinity of Planchenoit, and shortly afterwards it was reported that a column had actually been seen. The Duke immediately sent an A.D.C. towards it with a request for an immediate re-inforcement of 3,000 men on the field of Waterloo.

But the Prussian Generals in command of the column refused to detach, so the British army continued hanging on.

Its patience, however, was getting a little frayed for it is

¹ *Ellesmere*, p. 179.

² *Jackson*, p. 43.

the endurance of restraint that breaks the spirit. How long must they stand to be blown to pieces by that merciless artillery fire which ceased only when the attack of the enemy broke upon them. If only they could advance !

Sometimes murmurs would reach the Commander's ears, the murmurs of dogs fighting upon a leash, but always the quiet soothing tones, strong with the confidence of ultimate victory, of him who held them on the leash, would nerve them afresh to their gruelling task.

And as they watched him riding along the crest of his position, as composedly as at a review, whilst shot and shell fell fast around him, or quietly directing some operation under the heaviest fire, a new inspiration would be born within them.

Not until the end of the day, and almost at the moment of victory did the Duke show any signs of strain, and then it was only his muscles that betrayed him, causing him to slide the tube of his telescope somewhat nervously in and out of its socket,* as he watched the last attack of the Imperial Guard.

Up till early evening Napoleon had had the best of the battle, though he was by no means satisfied at his progress ; for in spite of that thin and shattered line against which his attacks were now made, the Duke's army still held firm, and seemed never to have heard the word defeat. The battle was not to be so easily won as he had confidently expected. Besides, his own army had suffered heavily and he was beginning to realize the truth of what his Peninsular Generals had told him about the fighting capacity of British troops.

About 6 o'clock his situation became decidedly critical. The advent of the Prussians could no longer be discounted, since they were already nibbling on his rear, and he had

* This story comes from a subaltern of the 52nd Regiment who was near the Duke at the time. It is quoted by Jackson, *Reminiscences of a Staff Officer*, p. 56.

been obliged to detach a corps to deal with them. And now from the front line came a request for reinforcements—and where was he to get them from unless they dropped from heaven? Everything was now in action except the Imperial Guard which had been held in reserve for the final act of victory; the last and trump card of the pack. Well, he would have to play it now, force his enemy's hand, and take the trick.

And whilst the Imperial Guard was forming for attack a fresh effort was made against the fateful centre of the Allied army, and a terrific cannonade along the whole of the Allied front still further reduced that honeycombed and skeleton line.

It was now about 7 o'clock.

The Duke's situation looked very black.

In all three Arms of the Service [says Siborne] the losses had been awfully severe. Battalions, dwindled to mere handfuls of men, were commanded by either Captains or Subalterns. A vast number of guns along the whole extent of the Line had been disabled. . . . Cavalry Brigades with the exception of Vivian's and Vandaleur's on the Left, were reduced to less than the ordinary strength of Regiments—Somerset's and Ponsonby's Brigades united did not comprise two squadrons.¹

I shall never forget [says Kincaid] the scene which the field of battle presented . . . Our division, which had stood upwards of five thousand men at the commencement of the battle, had gradually dwindled down into a solitary line of skirmishers. The twenty-seventh regiment were lying literally dead, in square, a few yards behind us . . . The smoke still hung so thick about us that we could see nothing. I walked a little way to each flank, to endeavour to get a glimpse of what was going on; but nothing met my eye except the mangled remains of men and horses . . .

I had never yet heard of a battle in which everybody was killed but this seemed likely to be an exception, as all were going by turns.²

The point against which the first attack of the Imperial Guard was directed was the rise of the Allied position half-way between Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte.

¹ *Siborne*, p. 506.

² *Kincaid, Adventures*, p. 170.

It was under this rise that the Duke had stationed his first Foot Guards, thus bringing them precisely on the spot Napoleon had chosen for his attack.

The attack was preceded by the usual heavy cannonade during which time the Guards lay down in the shelter of a ditch.

As the smoke of the firing died away a column of French Grenadiers, 6000 strong, was seen ascending the rise, sweeping forwards in perfect formation in spite of the punishment dealt them by the British artillery.

On nearing the top they became full of elation ; almost it would seem as if their reputation had won the position for them, for there was no sign of anything to bar their progress, and only a few cocked hats of mounted officers showed above the ridge.

But under one of those cocked hats was the head of Wellington, and as the Grenadiers charged forward with an exultant shout, he gave a quiet order to his Guards,* who instantly rose up, as it were out of the ground, and poured a devastating fire into the ranks of the astonished Frenchmen.

The effect was overwhelming. In less than a minute 300 were down and the Imperial Guard which had never before failed in an attack, halted, wavered, tried to deploy, and finally falling into confusion were driven off the ridge by a charge from the triumphant Britishers.

A second column of the Imperial Guard which had commenced its attack about twelve minutes after the first, shared the same fate, the outstanding feature of its repulse being the gallant charge at a critical moment of the 52nd regiment.

* This was the origin of the famous "Up, Guards, and at 'em", which the Duke never said. "I did not hear him," observes Major-General Lord Saltoun of the 1st Foot Guards, "nor do I know any person, or ever heard of any person that did" (*Waterloo Letters*, p. 248).

"What I must have said", observed the Duke to Croker, "and possibly did say was, 'Stand up, Guards !' and then gave the commanding officers the order to attack" (*The Croker Papers*, Vol. II, p. 469).

The repulse of the Imperial Guard, though a great blow to French prestige and morale, did not of necessity betoken French defeat.

The first two columns of the Imperial Guard, as Siborne points out,

constituted but the Van of the attacking force, which comprised no less than the whole Front Line of the French Army. D'Erlon's Corps from the right, and Reille's Corps from the left, were pouring forth their numerous columns, the principal portion of which had already reached more than midway towards the Allied position, and presented a formidable array; whilst from the Heights which they had quitted, their Artillery thundered forth as vigorously, over their heads, upon the exhausted Line of the Allies, as at any previous period of the Battle.¹

Napoleon was therefore not yet at the end of his tether, he only wanted a little breathing space, and under his magic influence his army would put forth super-strength and the battle, if not a French victory, might yet become stalemate.

But he was not to be given that breathing space, for now the decisive hour had struck, and the great mind of Wellington leapt upon it; and as he watched the tidal wave of battle welling up once more towards him, he went out to meet it, and hurled it back upon itself, so that it broke into a thousand eddies and whirlpools, and engulfed the source from which it sprung.

It was the hour of sunset, and for a few moments some of the setting rays pierced through the dense, smoke-laden atmosphere, filling the battlefield with a strange and lurid light.

And in that light, outlined against the hazy horizon, on a rising piece of ground, the British Commander sat quietly on his gallant little horse, his face irradiated with an "almost superhuman" ² expression, his hat raised aloft, waving his army forward in a gesture of mute but eloquent command.

¹ *Siborne*, p. 544.

² *Lady Shelley* Vol. I, p. 96.

This was the moment of fulfilment, a sacramental moment, and as they felt its power surging through them, the Allied army, like an arrow that has been drawn back to the limit of the bow's endurance, shot forward on an impulse of irresistible triumph.

Gone were all thoughts of fatigue, forgotten the long-drawn-out day of agony behind them; only the knowledge of a great new force was theirs.

Colours were now unfurled and raised aloft, drums beat, trumpets sounded the advance, and the exultant cheering of the Duke's army drowned for awhile those sinister sounds of suffering that lie beneath all moments of victory.

There was no stopping them now, and as this inspired army, lifted up to the sphere of achievement, bore down upon them, the enemy broke and fled before it.

And because the gods are ever ready to help those who bravely do their part, so when the Duke's army had made its great advance, the Prussians began to arrive upon the battlefield, and joining in the pursuit sealed the victory.

The Allied Army now settled down in its saddle with all the zest of a fox-hunting run. "No cheering, my lads, but forward and complete your victory",¹ cried the Duke as he galloped up to the 95th, who received him with a mighty cheer. For hounds were in full cry, the scent was keen, and nothing must be allowed to check this glorious run.

It was wonderful to be going at last, to be really moving forward after those weary hours of hanging on.

Wonderful, too, to see clearly again, for the advance had carried the Allies beyond the smoke;

and [says Kincaid] to people who had been for so many hours enveloped in darkness, in the midst of destruction, and naturally anxious about the result of the day, the scene which now met the eye conveyed a feeling of more exquisite gratification than can be conceived. It was a fine summer's evening . . . The French were flying in one confused mass. British lines were seen in close pursuit, and in admirable order, as far

¹ Kincaid, *Adventures*, p. 172.

as the eye could reach to the right, while the plain to the left was filled with Prussians. The enemy made one last attempt at a stand on the rising ground to our right of La Belle Alliance ; but a charge from General Adam's brigade again threw them into a state of confusion, which was now inextricable, and their ruin was complete. Artillery, baggage, and everything belonging to them, fell into our hands. After pursuing them until dark, we halted about two miles beyond the field of battle, leaving the Prussians to follow up the victory.¹

As soon as the Duke had called the halt, and the elation of the pursuit died away, a great sadness descended upon him.

During the ride back which was at a walk [says one of his staff] . . . I did not observe the Duke speak to any of his little suite ; indeed he was evidently sombre and dejected . . . The few individuals who attended him wore, too, rather the aspect of a little funeral train than that of victors in one of the most important battles ever fought.²

Small wonder that the Commander-in-Chief was sad, for the field of victory from which he was riding was before all things a field of horror and a field of pain. Victory was as yet but a cold knowledge realized only by the brain, whilst pain all triumphant, all transcendent thrust its brutal evidences into eyes and ears and nostrils. The whole air vibrated with it ; no one whose heart was alive could ride through the zone of its triumph without becoming submerged in it.

All around lay the mutilated remains of men and horses, broken bodies perhaps wounded early in the day and lying helpless through the long hours amidst its horrors. Some had been crushed under the wheels of the artillery, their bodies tossed to and fro and trodden into the ground like so many clods of earth.

Here lay a heap of Cuirassiers, “literally piled on each other . . . their horses struggling upon their wounded bodies”.³ Here sprawled a headless artillery driver whose face “still remained attached to the torn and bloody neck”,⁴

¹ Kincaid, *Adventures*, p. 271.

² Jackson, p. 60.

³ Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, p. 275.

⁴ Mercer, p. 283.

a fearful spectacle, the open eyes staring out upon the world of horror around.*

Fortunate, indeed, were the dead whose bodies lay in masses all over the battlefield, but alas, so many were still alive and from the tortured relics of humanity groans still issued.

Terrible, too, were the sufferings of the horses, innocent creatures,

mild, patient, enduring. Some lay on the ground with their entrails hanging out and yet lived. One poor animal had lost . . . both his hind legs, and there he sat the long night through on his tail, looking about as if in expectation of coming aid, sending forth from time to time long and protracted melancholy neighing.¹

Another piteous creature had only half a head, the rest being blown away below the eyes, yet he, too, lived, "and seemed", says an officer, "fully conscious of all around, whilst his full clear eye seemed to implore us not to chase him from his companions".²

During the ride back to Waterloo, Wellington and Blücher met: "Mein lieber Kamerad", exclaimed the gallant old warrior, embracing his younger confrère heartily upon both cheeks; and then words failing him he added, "quelle affaire", "which", observed the Duke, "was pretty much all he knew of French".³ A few minutes' conversation ensued in which Blücher undertook to continue the pursuit,

¹ *Mercer*, p. 183.

² *Ibid.*, p. 166.

³ *Stanhope*, p. 245.

* So terrible was the appearance of this mutilated corpse that early on the following morning a sergeant of artillery came to Captain Mercer with a request to bury Driver Crammond. "And why particularly 'Driver Crammond'?" asked Mercer. "Because he looks frightful, sir; many of us have not had a wink of sleep for him" (*Mercer, Waterloo*, p. 183).

"... Scenes . . . which, if looked at ere hostilities begin, would go a great way towards curing statesmen of their indifference to human suffering, and suggest some other and more Christian means than battle for settling the quarrels of Nations" (*Gleig, The Battle of Waterloo*, p. 327).

then cordially saluting each other they parted and went their different ways.

It was somewhere after ten o'clock when the Duke reached the Inn at Waterloo, and flung himself from off the back of that redoubtable animal Copenhagen, who had carried his master all day through the battle and like his master had come out unscathed.

The little inn to which the Duke returned was a house of sadness, filled with the wounded and dying; amongst their number Sir Alexander Gordon, that faithful aide-de-camp and friend, who had been brought in from the battlefield only to die.

The Duke's dinner was waiting for him at the inn, prepared with the customary care by his imperturbable French cook, who had refused to allow a battle to affect his culinary art and resisted all entreaties and endeavours to move him to the rear. The Duke had ordered dinner and the Duke would return to eat it.

And he did eat it, though more as a mechanical reaction to his physical needs than from any personal enjoyment, for his thoughts were hovering round those dreadful empty places at his table, and his eyes were fixed with painful anxiety upon the door, which every time it opened to admit a familiar figure drew from him a sigh of relief and a fervent, "Thank God I have seen him."

Then when he had finished eating, "he held up both hands in an imploring attitude", saying "'The hand of Almighty God has been upon me this day', jumped up, went to his couch and was asleep in a moment".¹

He was called shortly after three o'clock on the following morning by Dr. Hume who came with the news of Gordon's death and other casualties. The Duke was instantly wide awake,

He had, as usual [says Hume], taken off all his clothes, but had not

¹ *Sir Harry Smith, Vol. I, p. 291.*

washed himself ; and as I entered the room he sat up in his bed, his face covered with the dust and sweat of the previous day, and extended his hand to me, which I took and held in mine, whilst I told him of Gordon's death, and related such of the casualties as had come to my knowledge. He was much affected. I felt his tears dropping fast upon my hands, and looking towards him, saw them chasing one another in furrows over his dusty cheeks.¹

As soon as Hume left him, the Duke rose, washed, dressed, shaved, had a cup of tea and some toast and then sat down to write his despatch.

But as he wrote it the account of further casualties were brought him and he broke off, feeling he could not bear to write any more just then. Then mounting the indefatigable Copenhagen he rode into Brussels.

There was no elation in the heart of the Duke during that morning ride ; the harvest of victory had been too bitter, and the cost too great. How many a faithful friend who had followed him through his campaigns was now laid low. Picton * was dead, Gordon and Canning † would ride with him no more, Ramsay, too, and a host of others lay still upon that awful field. The Prince of Orange was badly wounded, Fitzroy Somerset had lost an arm, De Lancey,‡

¹ *Wellington in Private Life*, pp. 217, 218.

* The gallant Picton fell early in the day during the first French attack. He fell at the head of the 5th Division, being struck by a ball in the temple. He had been wounded at Quatre Bras and went into the Battle of Waterloo with two broken ribs and other injuries. Yet no one knew of this but his servant ; Picton refusing medical aid, for fear of being kept out of further fighting !

† Colonel Canning of the 3rd Foot Guards, aide-de-camp to the Duke, and one of his Peninsular officers.

‡ Sir William de Lancey was near the Duke when he was wounded. " Near three when Sir William was riding beside the Duke a cannon ball struck him . . . and knocked him off his horse to several yards' distance. The Duke at first imagined he was killed . . . seeing he was alive, (for he bounded up again and then sank down) he ran to him and stooping down, took him by the hand. Sir William begged the Duke . . . to take away the crowd that gathered round him and to let him

washed himself ; and as I entered the room he sat up in his bed, his face covered with the dust and sweat of the previous day, and extended his hand to me, which I took and held in mine, whilst I told him of Gordon's death, and related such of the casualties as had come to my knowledge. He was much affected. I felt his tears dropping fast upon my hands, and looking towards him, saw them chasing one another in furrows over his dusty cheeks.¹

As soon as Hume left him, the Duke rose, washed, dressed, shaved, had a cup of tea and some toast and then sat down to write his despatch.

But as he wrote it the account of further casualties were brought him and he broke off, feeling he could not bear to write any more just then. Then mounting the indefatigable Copenhagen he rode into Brussels.

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